

# *Journal of World Buddhist Cultures*

Vol. 5

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Ryukoku University**

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## Editorial Note

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**Kosuke Shimizu**

**Director, Research Center for World Buddhist Cultures**

The Research Centre for World Buddhist Cultures (RCWBC) was able to arrange two symposia and several workshops during the 2021–2022 academic year despite the COVID-19 epidemic. The symposia and workshops covered a wide range of topics, from basic research in Buddhist studies to applied research on contemporary social and political events. Through these activities, we are confident that the RCWBC has contributed to the further development of Buddhist studies. Most of these events were conducted online, where we were able to attract a large audience. We are grateful for the cooperation we received to make this possible.

With great pleasure, we present the fifth volume of the *Journal of World Buddhist Cultures*. The journal upholds the rigorous standards of a peer-review process. We are very proud of the articles that have been included in this volume, and would like to thank all the reviewers for their kind and thoughtful comments. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to all the contributors.

We hope that through the quality of our research results, we will build a network of Buddhist studies with people from all over the world. We look forward to furthering collaboration in the future.

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## 発刊の辞

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清水 耕介  
世界仏教文化研究センター長

コロナウイルスの蔓延が続いた 2021 年度、世界仏教文化研究センターは二つのシンポジウムと多くの研究会を開くことができました。これらは仏教学の基礎研究から現代の社会情勢についての応用研究まで幅広いトピックを取り上げ、仏教研究の更なる展開に寄与したと自負しております。これらのほとんどはオンラインで行われ、多くの聴衆を集めることができました。これも皆様のご協力の賜物であると感謝しております。

さて、こうした様々な研究活動を通して『世界仏教文化研究』の第 5 号を皆様にお届けできることを大変喜んでおります。本誌は大変厳しい査読過程を設け、そうした厳しい査読を通過した今回の掲載論文は、非常に質の高いものが揃ったと自負しております。今回の査読者の皆様からは厳しくも丁寧なコメントいただき、本当にありがとうございました。また、投稿いただいた皆様にも厚く御礼を申し上げます。

このような質の高い研究成果を通して、世界各地の皆様と共に仏教研究のネットワークを構築してまいりたいと考えております。今後とも、何卒よろしく願いいたします。

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## 凡 例

- 1, 本誌は、英語を主言語とするが、日本語による投稿もさまたげない。したがって、目次、巻末執筆者等は、英語と日本語を併記する。
- 2, 漢字表記については、翻訳を含む日本語原稿の場合、一部の人名、書名を除き、原則、常用漢字に統一する。
- 3, 本誌中に使用されている図版の無断コピーは固く禁ずる。



# *Articles*





# **Biography as Interreligious Dialogue:**

## **The Case of Modern Biographies on Shinran**

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**Abstract**

This article discusses the possibility of reading biographies as interreligious dialogues. It focuses on Shinran and three modern biographies influenced by Christianity: Murata Tsutomu's *The True Biography of Shinran*, Ishimaru Gohei's *The Passion of Shinran*, and Kurata Hyakuzō's *The Priest and His Disciples*. Most of the previous research on religious biographies has addressed the question of the biography's historical adequacy or analysed the texts from the standpoint of the history of literature. However, there has been hardly any attempt to clarify the potential of biographies in the doctrinal discourse. This article contributes to this field of study by analysing the dialogical structure of biographies that extensively use the Christian language and refer to similarities within the development of both religious traditions. The three biographies contribute to the interreligious dialogue by describing Shinran's life in the context of a Christian background. This approach allows the reader to observe connections between thematised religions because the religious practice of Shinran in his life is a touchstone to prove the compatibility of the Jōdoshin Buddhist and Christian teachings. Murata's biography conducts interreligious dialogue through comparison. Ishimaru's narrator uses the Christian language to tell the story of Shinran's struggles. Kurata creates a new language and understanding of Jōdoshin Buddhist teachings that cannot be clearly assigned to either of the two religions. The article clarifies how biographies contribute to the interreligious dialogue and intrareligious discourse on doctrine.

# Biography as Interreligious Dialogue:

## The Case of Modern Biographies on Shinran

Markus RÜSCH

**Keywords:** Interreligious Dialogue, Biography, Shinran, Christianity, Doctrinal Studies

### 1. Introduction

The life of Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262) has gained attention in a high number of contexts. It stands in the centre of the most crucial ceremony in Jōdoshin Buddhist practice—Hōonkō 報恩講 (Assembly to return in gratitude [Shinran’s] benevolence).<sup>1</sup> Shinran is one of the most recognised priests in biographical literature. He has also become the object of studies aiming to confirm the historicity of his biography. However, despite this relevance to academia and ritual practice, we can hardly observe equal importance in terms of approaching Shinran’s teachings. One reason for this problem is easy to conceive: biographies do not directly deal with doctrinal problems in most cases. However, because a biography is not only a chronology but creates a causality to connect the events of a person’s life, it makes usage of certain axiology.<sup>2</sup> At this level, the question of a biography’s author is irrelevant because it is the content of the narrator’s argument within the story, not the author’s motives, which must be the basis for analysing the message of the biography.

Another reason lies in the widespread concept that those interested in doctrinal questions should read texts discussing points of the teachings in the style of a treatise. This idea is further supported by the fact that reading a biography as a text discussing doctrine requires considerable prior knowledge. The research literature also reflects this tendency because most of it tries to clarify the historicity or the development of Shinran’s images in the context of the history of literature.<sup>3</sup> This article takes the opposite approach

<sup>1</sup> The most prominent examples in the context of religious practice are Kakunyo’s 覚如 *Godenshō* 御伝鈔 (Essentials of the Life [of Shinran]) and Zonkaku’s 存覚 *Tandokumon* 嘆徳文 (Scripture to Praise the Virtues [of Shinran]).

<sup>2</sup> The point is not whether the biography is presented as a table or in sentences but where an author uses for example subordinating conjunctions such as “because” or “whereas.”

<sup>3</sup> Although much research discusses the historical truth within Shinran biographies and clarifies the development of Shinran images, both approaches do not go beyond the study of history. In this context, the most notable works are Akamatsu, *Shinranden no kenkyū*; Imai, *Shinran no denshō to shijitsu*; En’ya,

and detaches the biographies of Shinran from history. This will allow us to use the biographies as a tool to discuss the teachings of Shinran. The condition for this reading is to conceive the biographies as fiction, thus facilitating uncovering new elements in this text genre.<sup>4</sup> Based on this, I will discuss how biographies can contribute to the interreligious dialogue.

## 2. Interreligious Dialogue and Biographies of Shinran

Before beginning the analysis of the biographies, it is necessary to define the term “dialogue.” A dictionary defines it as “a formal discussion between two groups or countries, especially when trying to solve a problem, end a disagreement, etc.”<sup>5</sup> The main point lies in the existence of a specific question. On this background, the parties compare their view on a topic and try together to “solve a problem.” In most cases, interreligious (or interfaith) dialogue means that two or more discussion participants share arguments on a specific topic derived from their religious standpoint.

My approach slightly differs from this structure because I do not want to focus on dialogues with multiple participants that one biography may include as part of its story. I want to consider the narrator as one participant and the characters - especially the protagonist - as another. The first standpoint appears in the shape of the biography’s language, whereas the content of the figures’ actions expresses the second standpoint. One simple example of such kind of interreligious dialogue can sound as follows: “Shinran was moved by the blessing that he surely will reach heaven.” The participants engaging in dialogue are not distinguishable. Therefore, my understanding of the term interreligious dialogue differs because it is a dialogical monologue that includes two or more positions. Moreover, as the example made clear, one standpoint often appears implicitly in the shape of a religious position expressed by Shinran’s figure. If we apply this to the example above, the sentence does not become a dialogue as such, but only if the reader anticipates the Buddhist terminology of kindness (*onkei* 恩恵) and Pure Land or Nirvana as (un)equal terms compared with blessing and heaven. Therefore, the author of such a biography needs to include both positions sufficiently in terms of content and rhetoric.

In the case of the biographies of Shinran, the above-mentioned problem of the dialogue is Shinran’s life and his struggles. Because the purpose of the dialogue is not simply to exchange information, the meaning of biography as dialogue cannot solely provide historical data about Shinran. Instead, his life serves as a means to discuss various problems he had as a religious thinker. Therefore, if we read biographies as a type of religious dialogue, the specific problem rarely appears in the title or subtitle of the text.

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*Katarareta Shinran*; Taira, *Rekishi no naka ni miru Shinran*; and Matsuo, *Shirarezaru Shinran*. The two works that have a similar approach to this article are Umehara, *Shinran 'yottsuo no nazo' o toku*; and Sueki, *Shinran*.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion of the possibility and method of connecting studies in biography and doctrine, see Rüsche, *Argumente des Heiligen*.

<sup>5</sup> Turnbull, *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, “Dialogue,” 418.



Instead, the author addresses various topics by stressing their image of the characters - particularly the protagonist - in the novel. In this sense, a biography functions similar to a doctrinal treatise. The author expresses their interpretation of the teachings through the practice and daily life of the characters. Therefore, a biography can, on its own, contribute to the doctrinal discourse by clarifying aspects that tend to be overlooked in more abstract discussions of the teachings.

Notably, we cannot read every biography as interreligious dialogue. The question is, what are the two or more groups that represent the condition for dialogue? In this article, I want to understand dialogue as the use of terminology from a religious tradition that differs from the context of the thematised story. Therefore, in our case, the first dialogue partner is Shinran, his life, and the language of Pure Land Buddhism. The second partner is the narrator, who uses a non-Buddhist language, which is the vocabulary of Christianity in this article. Only the author of such a biography creates a dialogue where the dialogue partners are parts of the narrative. Such dialogues are conceivable from a macro perspective between Christianity and Buddhism and as intrabuddhist or even among Jōdoshin Buddhist dialogues.<sup>6</sup> As I will discuss in the following, this approach to Shinran's life runs the risk of creating a new religion that is neither Christian nor Buddhist. However, the three examples show that a successive dialogue clarifies the similarities and differences between the two partners and can provide new insights into one's own tradition.

Among the many biographies on Shinran written until today, the novels and dramas from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are notable in the context of interreligious dialogue. However, we cannot maintain that the authors wrote the biographies with the motivation or consciousness to conduct a dialogue. Therefore, in this article, I do not refer to the putative motivations or biographies of the authors; however, my purpose is to conduct an intratextual analysis. The thesis of this article is not that the authors wrote their biographies to conduct a religious dialogue. I aim to maintain that their biographies are (unwittingly) cases of interreligious dialogue as long as we read them from the standpoint of doctrinal studies. Concerning biographies of Shinran before Christianity's strong impact, we can observe interreligious dialogue between Jōdoshin Buddhism and Shinto. This dialogue does not stand in the centre of these biographies. However, referring to Shinto within the biographies is a crucial sign of the self-consciousness of the Jōdoshin Buddhist community and the understanding of the teachings towards Shinto. Examples of such a dialogue between Jōdoshin Buddhism and Shinto are the *Godenshō* 御傳鈔 (Essentials of the Life [of Shinran]) and *Shinran shōnin eshiden* 親鸞聖人繪詞傳 (Illustrated Biography of the Saint Shinran).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> We also can call parts of the stories on wondrously excellent people (*myōkōninden* 妙好人伝) an intra Jōdoshin Buddhist dialogue since they thematise the two standpoints within the dispute “confusion [concerning] the three [types of] acting” (*sangō wakuran* 三業惑乱). See for example Shinshū Shiryō Kankōkai, *Taikei Shinshū Shiryō: Denkihen*. Vol. 8, *Myōkōninden*, 265.

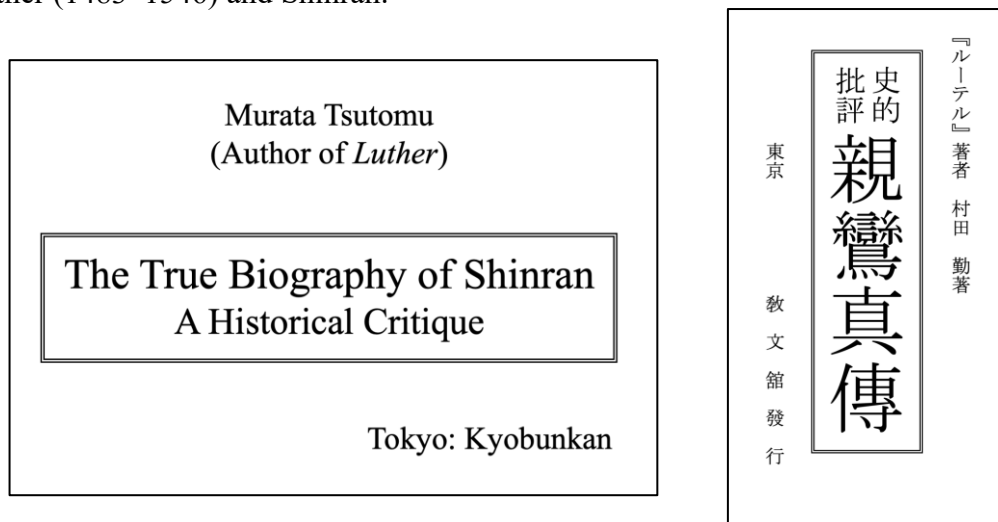
<sup>7</sup> See Jōdo Shinshū Honganjiha Sōgō Kenkyūjo, *Jōdo Shinshū Seiten Zensho*, vol. 4, 97–102 and Shinshū Shiryō Kankōkai, *Taikei Shinshū Shiryō: Denkihen*. Vol. 1, *Shinranden*, 365/368.

In this article, I analyse the biographies *Shinran shinden* 親鸞真傳 (The True Biography of Shinran, first published in 1896), *Junan no Shinran* 受難の親鸞 (The Passion of Shinran, first published in 1922), and *Shukke to sono deshi* 出家とその弟子 (The Priest and his Disciples, first published in 1917) as examples of interreligious dialogues between Jōdoshin Buddhism and Christianity.<sup>8</sup> Especially in the cases of *Junan no Shinran* and *Shukke to sono deshi*, we can hardly say that such a dialogue was the purpose of the authors when writing their texts. However, both authors describe the life of Shinran by extensively using the Christian language, whereby the dialogical context is automatically given. This article aims to clarify the intratextual tools to look at Shinran’s teachings from a Christian perspective. Further, I want to discuss the potentials and limits of biographies as dialogue to determine how they can contribute to the doctrinal discourse in general.

### 3. Examples of Biographies as Interreligious Dialogue

#### 3.1 Murata Tsutomu, *Shinran shinden*: Comparison as Dialogue

As the title of Murata’s biography indicates, the author tries to account for the so-called historically true parts of Shinran’s life. He informs the reader about this approach already on the front page which contains a “subtitle” in smaller letters that reads “a historical critique.” Further, this page also includes an essential paratextual element—namely, the note that Murata is the author of a book titled “Luther.” Therefore, the reader can expect a biography of Shinran that shows high awareness of Christianity and, presumably, will provide several comparative notes on the relationship between the religions that followed Luther (1483–1546) and Shinran.



<sup>8</sup> I use the following editions of the biographies: Murata Tsutomu, *Shinran shinden* (1896), Ishimaru Gohei, *Junan no Shinran* (1922), and Kurata Hyakuzō, *Shukke to sono deshi* (1921). The biography written by Kurata is the only one that has also been translated. In this article, I use a reprint of the English translation by Glenn W. Shaw, first published in 1922. *Shukke to sono deshi* has also been translated into Dutch (*De priester en zijne discipelen*) in 1926 and French (*Le prêtre et ses disciples*) in 1932.

A perspective on Shinran's life, strongly influenced by Christianity, is apparent in the entire biography. The author is interested in providing a solid basis for discussing the facts of Shinran's biography. However, the point that the author provides many references to Luther shows that his interest in knowledge does not stop with simple historical data. In that case, no reference to the relationship between Luther and Shinran would be possible. Murata can pursue this latter interest only by referring to similarities in their teachings, which demands a distinct interpretation of the writings of these two figures. At this point, he does not argue on the level of historiography but theology. Here, Murata's text becomes interesting in the context of biography as interreligious dialogue. One example is the third chapter titled "The Origin of the Pure Land Sect and [Shinran's] Joining the Yoshimizu [Group],"<sup>9</sup> which Murata writes as follows after an explanation of the achievements of the Pure Land monk Ryōnin 良忍 (1073–1132):

In other words, the Pure Land sect before Hōnen developed step by step in that way. But at that point, the time was ripe, the people's hearts got tense again due to [new] demands, and finally, it came to the appearance of a great religion through the efforts of Hōnen. The role of Hōnen is very similar to Luther's. Although there were a high number of minor Luthers before Luther, there was the need to wait for the grand talent of Luther so that the important mission of founding a new sect finally got done, visible to all people. [Similarly:] Although there were a high number of minor Hōnens before Hōnen, in the end, the great work of establishing the Pure Land sect got public due to the great virtues of Hōnen.<sup>10</sup>

We may describe Murata's comparison of Luther and Hōnen 法然 (1133–1212) as directed to the historical formation of the two sects and the function Luther and Hōnen played in this context. His interest lies less in referring to doctrinal points. However, because Murata writes this part within a biography of Shinran, it is remarkable that the most critical turning point in the development of Pure Land thought came not with Shinran but with Hōnen. If we consider the popularisation of Christianity and an emphasis on one's inner faith as Luther's achievements, the "great work" of Hōnen lies in the founding of the Yoshimizu group and the accentuation of faith within religious practice. In contrast, although Pure Land thinkers such as Ryōnin spread their understanding of Buddhist teachings, their activities cannot break free from the existing organisations.

Murata's decision to put Hōnen on top of the development of Pure Land thought has an important impact on the function of Shinran within the interreligious dialogue. The first consequence is that Hōnen and his teachings became the centre of the religious movement. It is noteworthy that this must not necessarily be equal to what the modern or contemporary Jōdo sect conceives as Hōnen's teachings. However, the achievements of Shinran cannot exceed those of Hōnen, and therefore, his unique function lies at most in clarifying the teachings of his master. Hōnen belongs to one of the Seven Patriarchs in the Jōdoshin Buddhist sect. Hence, there is no problem in comprehending Hōnen's teachings as consistent with Jōdoshin Buddhism. Instead, the rhetoric of Hōnen as the

<sup>9</sup> The Yoshimizu Group refers to the community around Hōnen.

<sup>10</sup> Murata, *Shinran shinden*, 26.

zenith of Pure Land history complicates the construction of Shinran as the central figure of a religious community.

The second consequence concerns the understanding of Pure Land thought itself. Further reading would be necessary to clarify Murata's understanding of the completion of Pure Land thought. However, the part above shows that Shinran's significant development cannot clarify a new element in the teachings.<sup>11</sup> If the author wants to present Shinran as an eminent monk, his life must conform to the religious goal described in Hōnen's teachings. Similarly, to some extent, this applies to Luther's teachings. Although the reader is dependent on the statements of Murata on what he understands as Luther's religion, the reference to Luther sets another frame in which Shinran's attainments must be contextualised. Therefore, the religious valuation of Shinran's life is connected to the teachings of Hōnen and Luther.

Comparison as a type of interreligious dialogue provides a means to ease the approach to an unknown figure and their thinking. In this sense, Murata's *Shinran shinden* can function as an effective tool by which a reader who is already familiar with Luther and Hōnen may be led to the figure of Shinran. The efficacy of such an approach to a new readership is constrained by the fact that the extent of the reader's understanding of Shinran's teachings is limited to the reader's knowledge of the object of comparison. Hence, *Shinran shinden* requires an understanding of Luther's role in the history of Christianity and the central points of his teachings. The biography may only attract readers with such a background. Otherwise, one could not explain the function of the paratext that emphasises Murata's expertise in the Christian context. In addition to the problem of prior knowledge, the ability to reach new readers risks hindering an approach to Shinran for someone who bears a negative image of Luther. Therefore, the case of Murata shows us the potentials and limits of comparison as a type of interreligious dialogue. The comparison tends to clarify only the connections between the two traditions without discussing specific problems, such as the salvation of human beings. Instead, the construction of this distinct dialogical function is left to the reader, whom the author challenges in drawing doctrinal connections based on the comparisons given by Murata.

### 3.2 Ishimaru Gohei, *Junan no Shinran*: Heterogenous Language as Dialogue

Ishimaru's *Junan no Shinran* is the biography analysed in this article that most clearly depicts its protagonist using a Christian background. The author does this primarily through the specific use of language that the book's title and its chapters have already revealed. *Junan no Shinran* is divided into five chapters that deal with Shinran's married life, the reactions at Mount Hiei, the collapse of Hōnen's Yoshimizu group, and the banishment of Shinran. The titles of the chapters are as follows.

<sup>11</sup> We can call this a typical element in the hagiography of Shinran, such as the completion of his main work *Ken jōdo shinjitsu kyōgyōshō monrui* 顕浄土真実教行証文類 (Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice, and Realisation of the Pure Land [Way]) that marks—in this rhetoric—the beginning of Shinran's original thinking. On this basis, the author has the best conditions to argue that Shinran fulfils the conditions of a notion of a saint based on this new kind of Buddhist teachings.

1. Tumult at Mount [Hi]ei
2. Shinran's Marriage
3. The World of Faith (*shin* 信)
4. The Collapse of the Yoshimizu [Group]
5. The Passion (*junan* 受難)

The first detail I want to point out is the usage of the word “faith.” The translation obscures Ishimaru’s use of the term that we cannot principally find in Shinran’s writing. In the second context, we can find the character compounds *shinjitsushin* 真実信, *shinjin* 信心, or *shingyō* 信樂. Although some less representative parts in Shinran’s commentary writings use the word *shin* 信,<sup>12</sup> we can assume that Ishimaru uses *shin* as a reference to Shinran’s *shinjin*. This approach is made even clearer by the choice of the word *junan*, which means “meeting with hardship” in general, but in a religious context, is used for the sufferings of Jesus on the cross.<sup>13</sup> Considering that the lifetime of Jesus ended with his death on the cross, it is difficult to compare this state with the banishment of Shinran. This point makes two characteristics of Ishimaru’s novel clear. First, if we analyse this work from the standpoint of comparative religion, we may identify more differences between the lives of Shinran and Jesus than similarities. For example, while the hardship of Jesus refers primarily to his death, in the case of Shinran, it implies only a banishment over a comparatively short period and personal suffering over an uncommon long lifetime. Another example is the relationship between God and Jesus as father and son, whereas Amida and Shinran are not even similarly connected.

These limits of simple comparison show us that this could not be the main intention for Ishimaru to write his novel. This aspect is related to the second point. If we assume that Ishimaru’s motive does not suggest the equivalence of Jesus and Shinran, we must ask what kind of new Shinran’s image his unorthodox language usage creates. By this method, Ishimaru brings the Christian and Jōdoshin Buddhist teachings into a dialogue because he uses the Christian language to describe the life of Shinran. This approach also makes it apparent that the objective of this novel is not to present several facts of Shinran’s biography but to tell the reader the religious attitude of the protagonist. Thereby, Ishimaru not only produces a new image of Shinran but discusses, at the same time, the differences as well as shared features of the teachings of both religions.

What could be an adequate interpretation of “passion” in the context of Jōdoshin Buddhism? The lives of Shinran and Jesus have in common that both became the object of hate by following the religious path they considered as truth. Although Shinran and Jesus proselytised other people, their activities were less explicitly directed against other religious groups. Nevertheless, both were subjected to great suffering because of their views of true teachings. However, the type of consequence and its meaning differ in the

<sup>12</sup> One example is the *Yuishinshō mon’i* 唯信鈔文意 (Notes on ‘Essentials of Faith Alone’) where we read: “*Faith [shin]* is the heart and mind without doubt,” see Hirota, *The Collected Works of Shinran*, 451 (italics in the original) and Jōdo Shinshū Honganjiha Sōgō Kenkyūjo, *Jōdo Shinshū Seiten Zensho*, vol. 2, 683.

<sup>13</sup> Nihon kokugo daijiten dainihan henshū iinkai, *Nihon kokugo daijiten dainihan*, “Junan,” 1420.

main points as indicated above. In the case of Jesus, his crucifixion and voluntary suffering are connected to the salvation of all humans. In contrast, the sufferings of Shinran do not imply any good karmic seeds for others or even their—or his own—enlightenment. We may even call the teachings of Shinran the one in Japanese Buddhism, which is far from such thinking.

For example, terms such as “praying for empowerment” (*kaji kitō* 加持祈祷) and “making merit and offering it to the deceased” (*tsuizen kuyō* 追善供養) are for many Buddhist sects in Japan central in their practice. However, the Jōdoshin Buddhist understanding of Pure Land thought exhaustively negates the view that one can atone for the sins of oneself or others. Although several biographies of Shinran describe him as one of Amida’s transformation bodies (*keshin* 化身), even in these examples that may look similar to Jesus’ case, Shinran does not act as an individual but functions as a mediator of the working of Amida. Instead, Ishimaru’s decision to treat passion as the main topic in his novel thematises suffering as the fundamental problem of human existence and the fact that one cannot overcome this situation by its power. The greatest sufferings, such as Jesus’ crucifixion and Shinran’s banishment, were not the result of an intentional act such as violent missionary. Therefore, both cases are characterised positively by a high proportion of passivity. Following this interpretation, Ishimaru refers to passion to apply it to an individual’s experience (Jesus) and express a *conditio humana* using Shinran as an example and Jesus as a reference.

*Junan no Shinran* includes many cases where the author describes Shinran’s suffering with Christian terminology. The following three passages serve as examples:

1. What does the Venerable Hōnen teach? I do not know any details. But after I directly heard your own intimate confession (*kokuhaku* 告白) after you left Mount Hiei, I was not at all surprised about the planned marriage.<sup>14</sup>
2. [Shinran:] “It is a fact that I am still impure (*kegareteiru* 汚れて居る). Equal to what I confessed to you earlier, I am a human with deep passions (*bonnō* 煩惱). However, I cannot agree with [the view] that I have been pure (*kiyokatta* 清かつた) when I lived at Mount Hiei.”<sup>15</sup>
3. Practise is part of the Path of the Sages. Practise means morality (*dōtoku* 道徳). Needless to say, morality is necessary in this world. However, is there not something that makes salvation impossible for [humans] by precepts or morality? — The Buddha Amida puts the [question of] salvation at an unconditional (*zettai* 絶対) level. Does the true realm of a firm mind (*anjin* 安心) not lie in developing the faith [in this kind of salvation] in the greatest despair? — This does not mean that someone with faith (*shinjin* 信心) must throw away morality. “Salvation” means the unconditional realm that even transcends (*chōetsu* 超越) morality. “Namo Amidabutsu, Namo Amidabutsu.”<sup>16</sup>

As these three paragraphs illustrate, Ishimaru tries to approach the Jōdoshin Buddhist teachings through language largely detached from Jōdoshin Buddhism-specific word

<sup>14</sup> Ishimaru, *Junan no Shinran*, 39.

<sup>15</sup> Ishimaru, *Junan no Shinran*, 57.

<sup>16</sup> Ishimaru, *Junan no Shinran*, 168.

usage. This approach risks oversimplifying the doctrine and even causing misinterpretations. Concerning the above-cited paragraphs, the following terms derive from a non-Buddhist context: confession, morality, unconditional, and transcend, and to some extent also pure and impure. Because these terms belong to Christian and philosophical terminology, someone who demands consistency with the Jōdoshin Buddhist doctrine in a narrow sense may easily criticise Ishimaru's novel. However, if a reader keeps this risk in mind, there are no other means to conduct an authentic dialogue that tries to overcome a comparison that focuses on the similarities of specific terms.

However, what is the unique potential of this approach? What do we gain through the dialogue? The first quality lies in bringing together two traditions that were separated through their languages. Nevertheless, a supposedly even more significant capability lies in providing new perspectives or revealing weak points of another religion. The strength of Ishimaru's approach lies in creating a language frame that sheds light on the life of Shinran from a new direction. As mentioned above, if we understand a biography only as a genre that informs the reader about specific historical data about a figure, Ishimaru's novel would be of nearly no interest. However, by considering the life of an eminent religious figure as a story of fulfilling a religious goal, a new aspect of Shinran's life leads to a new aspect of his teachings.

The parts cited above reveal that the novel tells the reader that the Jōdoshin Buddhist faith is not connected to anything that is described as morality. Because morality is a topic that Shinran did not thematise directly, Ishimaru connects Shinran's teachings to new fields of human life. Another example is the emphasis on passion, which clarifies that suffering is immediately connected to salvation. As explained above, although suffering does not lead to salvation equal to Jesus' crucifixion, Ishimaru shows that an individual's suffering stands in a direct relationship with the salvation by Amida because it can be a chance to gain insight into the own powerlessness. Finally, in addition to widening the readership, the group of participants in a dialogue increases. Therefore, the discussion of a religious topic—such as the liberation of human beings—gains depth. Therefore, Ishimaru's approach of applying the Christian or philosophical language to Shinran's thinking does not mean that the parts in his Buddhism are similar to Christianity. Instead, Ishimaru invites new participants to the Jōdoshin Buddhist discourse and, therefore, contributes to interreligious dialogue and the interpretation of the Jōdoshin Buddhist doctrine.

### 3.3 Kurata Hyakuzō, *Shukke to sono deshi*: The Rhetoric of Intermixture

Kurata's approach is similar to Ishimaru's approach, but Kurata introduced Christian teachings to a considerably larger extent. In *Junan no Shinran*, we observed an attempt to express Jōdoshin Buddhist thinking using primarily Christian terminology. However, Kurata's understanding of Shinran and his use of language are characterised by a complex mixture of both positions, making it nearly impossible to divide the parts. The following sections will clarify that Kurata tries less to give an account of what one may call an orthodox understanding of Shinran's teachings. Instead, he tells the reader his personal view of religion and the problem of suffering. His tool to undertake this task is Shinran's

life and his disciples. However, both Jōdoshin Buddhist and Christian thought fundamentally influence these teachings. The following citation illustrates Kurata's rhetoric of combining the language of the mentioned two religious traditions.

*Yuien.* Please leave all to Buddha. I'm praying [*inotteimasu* 祈っています] for you with all my soul [*kokoro* 心, heart]. (*With emphasis.*) That you may realize your long cherished desire of happy rebirth in Paradise [*ōjō no hongai* 往生の本懐, the original purpose of being born (in the Pure Land)].

*Shinran.* To die has long been my wish. It's been my single hope. Now I've dreamed of the blessing [*shukufuku* 祝福] awaiting me on the other side of the grave! Now has come the time for that dream to be realized. The happy time. (*Pauses.*) Last night as I prayed, I fell into a sleep. It was blessed [*shukusareta* 祝された] with a grateful dream. The unworldly Pure Land, bright with majesty [*shōgon* 莊嚴, adornment] and beauty, spread out before my eyes. My soul [*tamashii* 魂] was filled with a mysterious joy [*kōfuku* 幸福]. I don't know how to convey to you that unearthly [*chijō no kagiri o koeta* 地上の限りを越えた] happiness. The Amida Sutra says, "All the men of highest virtue come together in one place [*shojō zennin kue issho* 諸上善人俱會一處]." I was surrounded by a throng of saints [*shōju no mure* 聖衆の群れ]. They all wore beautiful crowns. Abashed, I hung my head. When I heard that I had that day been added to that company, I wept for joy [*ureshisa* うれしき]. Then looking, I saw that beautiful crown was set on my head as on the rest. Then far off in the sky began to sound ethereal [*mimyō* 微妙] music. To this the throng of saints joined their voices and sang songs of praise [*homeru uta* 讃める歌] to Buddha. Then flowers fell from heaven, and all the air was filled with pure perfume [*kiyoi kaori* 淨い香り]. As I looked fascinated at the flowers raining down on the earth all covered with golden sand, I thought, "Ah, these must be the lotus blooms of Paradise [*mandarake* 曼陀羅華, flower of the Mandāra (tree)]." Then I awoke.

*Yuien.* What a holy [*tōtoi* 尊い, precious] dream!<sup>17</sup>

[...]

*Shinran.* What of Senku?

*Kenchi.* This spring he went to Ōshū. (*Tearfully.*) He can't get here in time.

*Shinran.* I'd rather hear that than see him. (*Pauses.*) All live together amicably. After I'm gone, all work for the law [*hō* 法, dharma] with united strength. Never quarrel. No matter what arises to give you painful or outraged feelings, don't curse [*noroi* 呪ひ] Buddha or man. Bless [*shuku seyo* 祝せよ] everything. Endure your pain. To endure is to make virtue your own. Love your neighbor [*rinjin o ai seyo* 隣人を愛せよ]. Treat the stranger kindly. In the name of Buddha [*butsu no na ni yotte* 佛の名によつて], all be bound together. (*His voice becomes thinner and thinner and has a tendency to break.*) It's wrong for you not to treat others as you'd be treated. (*YUIEN dips a fine-haired little brush in water and moistens SHINRAN's lips. The disciples follow his example.*) The judging heart [*sabaku kokoro* 裁く心] and the vowing heart come of devils. Be the servants [*shimobe* 僕] of others. Wash their feet [*hito no ashi o arattheyare* 人の足を洗つてやれ]. Bind the thongs of their shoes. (*Pauses.*) Glorious Buddha! [...] A miracle [*kiseki* 奇蹟]!<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Kurata, *The Priest and His Disciples*, 228–229 (italics in the original, underline added) and Kurata, *Shukke to sono deshi*, 274–275.

<sup>18</sup> Kurata, *The Priest and His Disciples*, 242–243 (italics and small capitals in the original, underline added) and Kurata, *Shukke to sono deshi*, 289–290.



As the underlined parts indicate, Kurata uses Christian and Buddhist terminology to express Shinran's sufferings and thoughts. By this means, he widens the perspective on Shinran's teachings. However, this method simultaneously risks reaching a stage where it becomes difficult to distinguish between religious traditions. We can call this a consequence of Kurata's religious standpoint, characterised by a high degree of eclecticism. Examples of distinct Christian terminology are as follows:

Blessing: God's help and protection, or a prayer asking for this.<sup>19</sup>

Earthly: The place where humans are dwelling and that is created by God.

Love your neighbour: Refers to the Great Commandment in *Luke* 10:27, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."<sup>20</sup>

It's wrong for you not to treat others as you'd be treated: Refers to the Golden Rule in *Luke* 6:31, "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."<sup>21</sup>

Wash their feet: Refers to the Christian maundy (foot washing).

Miracle: An act or event that does not follow the laws of nature and is believed to be caused by God.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to such terminology, Kurata also uses many typical terms from Pure Land Buddhism. For example, he refers to the Pure Land as the goal of birth, describes it as a place that is beautifully adorned, and the holy crowd (*shōju raigō/raikō* 聖衆來迎) accompanies people who reach that place. The characteristic of Kurata's writing style lies in establishing a multi-layered language in which neither the Christian nor the Buddhist terminology dominates. This means that Kurata uses Christian expressions to describe the Pure Land Buddhist process of someone being liberated by the holy crowd. In this case, he uses Buddhist terms to refer to visible aspects of salvation, while the Christian language serves to describe Shinran's personal feelings. If we positively value Kurata's drama, we can maintain that he uses the strengths of both religions to create a new path that can ease human beings' anxiety about death. Although it is questionable whether the two religions could perform this task on their own, we can see Kurata's motivation for this approach in combining the positive relationship of Christianity to this world with the spectacular world of the after-life in Pure Land Buddhism. We can observe this understanding of Kurata because he uses Buddhist terms to describe the human after death and Christian language for worldly concerns.

One key term of the second part of the citation above is "love," which is also a central topic in *Shukke to sono deshi* in general. Kurata maintains that the love of a human being should be equal to the unlimited love of the Buddha Amida. Therefore, his understanding of the Jōdoshin Buddhist doctrine demands humans' peaceful coexistence based on evident individualism. In this context, Amida serves less as the saviour of humankind than as a model for binding morality. This view implies that humans must

<sup>19</sup> Turnbull, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, "Blessing," 148.

<sup>20</sup> See *The Gospel according to St. Luke authorized (King James) Version*, 25.

<sup>21</sup> See *The Gospel according to St. Luke authorized (King James) Version*, 12.

<sup>22</sup> Turnbull, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, "Miracle," 977.

manifest the love of Amida in their actions. Shinran in Kurata's narrative is a person bearing deep anxiety towards his own afterlife. However, at the same time, he is concerned with religious morality that guarantees a peaceful community. A reading of Kurata's drama shows that he considered the Christian system of values more appropriate for solving mental problems in this world. However, in the context of interreligious dialogue, *Shukke to sono deshi* also provides the reader with the opportunity to question whether the Pure Land Buddhism of Shinran lacks a moral meaning, as described above. The multi-layered usage of religious language by Kurata is an impressive example of such a dialogue because the Christian description of the narrative points at a problem one may tend to overlook in the context of a pure Buddhist discourse. Therefore, the use of the Christian language to describe Shinran's sufferings puts the questioner in a dialogue that forces the partner to discover new elements in the own standpoint.

The following last citation clearly shows Kurata's understanding of the Pure Land teachings. In this example the description is influenced by Christianity, but, at the same time, we can also observe an interpretation of Pure Land thought that has noticeable elements of self-power. Notably, we may call this the orthodox variant of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. However, from the standpoint of Shinran's teachings, the quotation also shows problematic points whose harmonisation with the writings of Shinran may be complex. Kurata describes the scene of the moment of Shinran's death, and the purity of his deathbed as follows:

*Shinran.* It's drawn near. The omen [*kizashi* 兆し],—the room's all cleaned, isn't it?

*Yuien.* To the last speck of dust.

*Shinran.* My body's cleansed, isn't it?

*Shōshin.* You were bathed yesterday.

*Shinran.* Call the disciples. Call them all. For me to take leave of them. To give them my last blessing.

*Shōshin.* I go. (*Rises.*)

*Yuien* (*suppressing his great agitation and speaking to SHŌSHIN*). The doctor.

(*SHŌSHIN hurries out.*)

*Yuien* (*gripping SHINRAN's hand*). Master [*oshishōsama* お師匠様], please make your spirit [*oki* お氣] firm.

*Shinran* (*nodding*). A taper. Light a taper in the shrine [*butsudan* 佛壇, Buddhist altar]. Namu Amida Butsu.<sup>23</sup>

[...]

*Zenran.* I'm unfit. I've heaped up many sins [*tsumi* 罪].

*Shinran.* Amida [*Amidasama* 阿彌陀様] atoned [*tsugunōtekudasareta* 償ふて下された] for those sins aeons ago. They're forgiven, they're forgiven. (*His voice grows thin and stops. The Physician raises his brows.*) Now I'm going to leave this world. (*Thinly but firmly.*) Do you believe in Buddha? (*ZENRAN makes no reply.*) Don't refuse his mercy [*jihī* 慈悲]. Say

<sup>23</sup> Kurata, *The Priest and His Disciples*, 234 (italics and small capitals in the original) and Kurata, *Shukke to sono deshi*, 280.

you believe. Give peace to my heart on the day my soul returns above. (*ZENRAN turns pale with the anguish in his soul.*) All you have to do is receive it.<sup>24</sup>

These descriptions resemble the deathbed rites (*rinjū no gyōgi* 臨終行儀) found in Genshin's *Ōjō yōshū* 往生要集 (Essentials for Attaining Birth).<sup>25</sup> In *Shukke to sono deshi*, Shinran is so anxious about the circumstances of his death that he even instructs the people around him to guarantee an ideal and pure environment. If we interpret this scene favourably, Shinran's doubts concerning his faith are emphasised. However, even in that case, this scene gives to a significantly greater extent the impression that the salvation by Amida would not be unconditioned, which is in strong contrast to Shinran's teachings. One characteristic of Shinran's Pure Land Buddhism is the grounding on the notion of salvation that does not relate to a distinct environment or state of mind as the condition for being born in the Pure Land. From the perspective of interreligious dialogue, we can observe the conception that a priest grants a blessing in the moment of death—the Christian aspect—and that in this situation, the dying person must prepare a pure place—the Pure Land aspect—. We can argue that the coexistence of Christian and Buddhist terminology is the most direct way to conduct an interreligious dialogue.

In contrast, comparative religious studies tend only to list the religions' answers to specific questions. The characteristic of interreligious dialogue must lie in being confronted by a shared problem that the religions try to solve together. If we apply this to the passage quoted above, the shared problem is how one should behave in the moment of death. The type of dialogue that Kurata performs allows a distinction between the division of roles of each religion. However, Christianity and Pure Land Buddhism are intertwined in a new religion from the perspective of drama. The meaning of creating a religion that cannot be subsumed by an existing religion may be controversial. However, we can call *Shukke to sono deshi* a constructive literary work that can provide both religions with new perspectives and problems in their community.

*Shukke to sono deshi* ends with a stage direction that verifies that Shinran's soul well returned to heaven (*ten* 天). The conception that human beings on earth finally return to the realm above is based on the Christian worldview. As discussed above, this approach may direct readers towards the similarities between the Christian heaven and Amida's Pure Land. However, the last comments by Kurata in his drama also show the problems inherent in this proceeding. One example of a severe misunderstanding would be the concept that—equal to Christianity—Pure Land Buddhism teaches life in the Pure Land as the final goal within the process of salvation.

However, if we connect both concepts by focusing on the human returning to a land filled with joy after one's death, the interreligious dialogue can deepen while clarifying the differences between religions. Therefore, the purpose of interreligious dialogue should not be to create as many points in common as possible but to clarify the shared features and differences. From the viewpoint of spreading the teachings of Shinran, we

<sup>24</sup> Kurata, *The Priest and His Disciples*, 244–245 (italics and small capitals in the original) and Kurata, *Shukke to sono deshi*, 291–292.

<sup>25</sup> Genshin, "Ōjō yōshū," 170–181.

must consider *Shukke to sono deshi* as a text that is prone to misunderstandings. Yet, the strength of this tool by Kurata lies in describing parts of the life of Shinran, and especially Yuien, which are mostly not thematised in biographies. Because the sections with historical evidence are very limited and mostly already fully uncovered in Kurata's lifetime, it is evident that the attraction of this drama is not historiographic. Kurata uses these grey or dark parts of Shinran's biography and the liberties of writing a drama that resulted from these circumstances to present a new understanding of Shinran as an individual and his teachings. An obvious advantage of this approach is a biography of Shinran that is easier to understand for a reader with a Christian background. However, even for a Jōdoshin Buddhist reader, this drama can become an opportunity to reconsider their religion. Moreover, one can gain insight into the concrete relationship between Christianity and Jōdoshin Buddhism concerning similar and different standpoints towards shared questions. *Shukke to sono deshi* realises this type of interreligious dialogue not by discussing various aspects of the teachings but by presenting how religious people spend their lives and respond to particular problems. This method is a unique feature of biographies understood as interreligious dialogue because they clarify parts of religious teachings and practices that doctrinal texts alone cannot make evident.

#### 4. Conclusion

The analysis above showed how biographies could contribute to interreligious dialogue. This article aimed to demonstrate that this genre does not only provide information about a person's life, but that biographies can be part of the discussion about doctrinal questions. All three authors used events from Christian history or the Christian language to describe the religious life of a Jōdoshin Buddhist. Therefore, the reader can clearly understand where both religions are similar and different. We can compare this method with an experiment that intentionally tells the story of Shinran in an alien environment. This method allows the reader to observe which situations and struggles in Shinran's life fit the Christian worldview and identify passages that cannot satisfy both dialogue partners. For example, the last citation from *Shukke to sono deshi* showed a concept similar to that of unconditioned salvation. However, we may regard the view of Amida as someone who atones the sins of human beings quite different from the Jōdoshin Buddhist conception of salvation regardless of one's sins. However, the judgement on the adequacy of several interpretations is part of the Christian and Jōdoshin Buddhist teaching discourse, equal to any doctrinal writing.

As I pointed out, one function of biographies on Shinran that uses the Christian language or events from the history of Christianity can lead a new type of consumer to Shinran and his teachings. Although this is essential potential of biographies as interreligious dialogue, there is little evidence to claim that the three biographies analysed in this article fulfilled this function regarding their contemporary readers and listeners. In particular, the translations of *Shukke to sono deshi* might have contributed to spreading knowledge about Shinran among Christians. The high popularity of that drama in Japan

may be related to another fact. All three authors described Shinran's life from outside of the sectarian community and, presumably, without attempting to contribute to the flourishing of the sect as an institution. Considering this, we should perceive the value of the three biographies for a Japanese-speaking person in modern Japan in approaching Shinran from an entirely new direction. In this historical dimension, the essential point was not that the biographies were interesting for Japanese Christians, but that the Christian language in Japanese was alien enough to liberate the content from the sectarian boundaries while leaving the topic in a religious context. This point indirectly connects to one goal of religious dialogue, which in my opinion lies in clarifying fundamental questions shared by all humans, which religions answer with more or less significant differences.<sup>26</sup>

In this article, I did not address the rhetorical function of that type of interreligious dialogue. In addition to the new doctrinal insights obtained through biographies, they also play an essential role in intercultural communication. Although an exhaustive use of the Christian language bears the risks described above, it also can allow readers with little or no prior knowledge to become familiar with an unknown religion. For example, even though the concepts of heaven in Christianity and Amida's Pure Land in Buddhism differ in fundamental respects, a combination of both parts within the narrative can allow an uninformed reader to gain access to the teachings of Shinran. We can observe this function of heterogenic language for intercultural exchange not only in modern times where, for example, Mori Ōgai 森鷗外 (1862–1922) refers to an old church at Kloster street in Berlin as “an old temple (*koji* 古寺).”<sup>27</sup> Even today, the Jōdoshin Buddhist community in America calls themselves “Buddhist Churches of America” and their leader a “Bishop.”<sup>28</sup> In the context of biographies and the usage of the Christian language, the author can access a new type of readership. Especially concerning Kurata's drama, his most crucial attainment is the spread of the name of Shinran and elements of his thought to a kind of recipient not limited to Jōdoshin Buddhist followers. Therefore, the meaning of intercultural exchange implies the crossing of country borders and can occur, as in the case of Kurata, even within one country and between different social groups.

I argue that one essential potential of biographies on Shinran has not yet been sufficiently examined. Most research focuses on the historical adequacy of texts or meaning in the context of the history of literature. The examples analysed above demonstrated that there is a function of biographies that do not primarily rely on historical dimensions. In this context, the life of Shinran and his inner thoughts are a means to present the application of religious teaching. On this basis, biographies with a dialogical structure as defined above can undertake the function of determining the dis/similarities of different religions and providing new impulses for the intrareligious discourse.

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<sup>26</sup> My approach to religious pluralism follows the concept of Perry Schmidt-Leukel. See especially Schmidt-Leukel, *Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Theology*.

<sup>27</sup> Mori, “Maihime,” 10.

<sup>28</sup> Buddhist Church of America, “Leadership,” <https://www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/leadership>.

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## **Foucault's Zen Body:**

**The meeting between Michel Foucault and the Zen master Ōmori Sōgen**

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**Abstract**

The topic of this article is centered on Michel Foucault's brief Zen practice in Japan, which happened in 1978 at the Rinzai Zen temple of Seitaiji, founded by the Zen Master Ōmori Sōgen; his stay at the temple also involved dialogues with some monks and Ōmori himself. Although this experience didn't inspire any significant reflection by Foucault upon Zen, Japan, or intercultural and interreligious dialogue, I argue that several important issues can be raised when analyzing it. I will focus, in the first instance, on the reasons that brought Foucault to be interested in Zen. I will briefly show how Foucault's interest in the history of subjectivity and in the techniques of the self are central in understanding why he decided to practice Zen. Then I will clarify how the body and the bodily experience he lived while meditating constituted the central element of this experience, briefly confronting his words with Ōmori's description of *zazen* practice. I will then define the ideal (or even ideological) starting points of Foucault and Ōmori when relating to each other. I will discuss the Occident/Orient divide of the former and the way Ōmori tried to adapt Zen when facing *western modernity*. Finally, I will argue that Foucault's Zen experience plays a specific role in the context of the ideal borders imposed by their orientalist discourses: I will show that Foucault, operating upon his body, somehow opened a breach within those imaginary borders. The article analyzes Ōmori's attitude towards the "West" as well, in order to better understand the thought of a fundamental figure of contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen.

## Foucault's Zen Body:

The meeting between Michel Foucault and the Zen master Ōmori Sōgen\*

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**Keywords:** Michel Foucault, Ōmori Sōgen, Orientalism, Body, Rinzai Zen Buddhism

### 1. Introduction

During his second trip to Japan in 1978, Michel Foucault (1926-1984) spent some time at Seitaiji, a temple belonging to *Rinzai-shū* 臨濟宗 (Rinzai school, one of the three sects of Japanese Zen). There he practiced *zazen* 坐禪,<sup>1</sup> meeting also one of the most famous Rinzai Zen masters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ōmori Sōgen 大森曹玄 (1904-1994). Besides being a Zen master, Ōmori was the president of the Rinzai Zen Buddhist University of Hanazono 花園 and a master of swordsmanship and calligraphy, arts that he included in his way of teaching Zen alongside with traditional methods. Having been the founder of both Seitaiji 青苔寺 and Chōzenji 超禪寺 (the latter a temple in Honolulu, Hawaii, the first Rinzai Zen temple outside Japan), Ōmori had several disciples, active both in Japan and overseas.<sup>2</sup> Transcriptions of the dialogues happened during that time appear in Foucault's *Dits et écrits* (Sayings and writings)<sup>3</sup> and in Ōmori's *Zen no hassō* (Zen thought),<sup>4</sup> but Foucault never discussed this meeting in detail.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Daniel Defert, Christian Polac and Moriaki Watanabe dampen the interest Foucault may have had in Zen, claiming that his stay at the temple was nothing more than mere “media

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<sup>1</sup> While the name of the temple is widely reported as Seion, this is probably due to a misreading of Seitaiji 青苔寺. Also, there are contradictory reports about the length of Foucault's stay at the monastery. As inferred from Daniel Defert's chronology, the overall trip to Japan lasted for 20 days, out of those only a few were dedicated to the stay at the temple. See Defert, “Chronology,” 67.

<sup>2</sup> See Hosokawa, *Ōmori Sōgen*.

<sup>3</sup> Foucault, “Michel Foucault et le zen.” The translation of the dialogues has been made by Christian Polac. See also Sakai and Solomon, “Introduction.” For a Japanese translation, see Foucault, “M. Fūkō to zen.”

<sup>4</sup> Ōmori, *Zen no hassō*. A few translated passages can be found in Hosokawa, *Ōmori Sōgen*, 85–91.

<sup>5</sup> Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient*, 199.

hype.”<sup>6</sup> However, Defert also reports that Foucault was an avid reader of Eugen Herrigel’s *Zen and the Art of Archery*<sup>7</sup> and that he had read several books on Zen preparing prior to his trip to Japan;<sup>8</sup> also, Foucault himself declared to have had a great interest in Buddhist philosophy.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the lack of any significant reflection on Zen in Foucault’s writings, a few scholars argued that interpreting and elaborating on the topic could reveal fundamental aspects of his thought. According to Lauri Siisiäinen, Foucault’s interest in Zen was not by any chance incidental, since it falls squarely within his interests during the late ‘70s and the early ‘80s, namely spirituality and de-subjectivation. Furthermore, Siisiäinen extensively elaborates Foucault’s reflections on Zen, arguing that they can help us understanding Foucault’s concept of *resistance* and the various ways to oppose *power*.<sup>10</sup> Uta Liebmann Schaub goes further claiming that Foucault’s concern with Eastern philosophy should be reconducted to an Oriental subtext in his thought, or in a generative code beneath his discourse,<sup>11</sup> that could explain parts of his work and which serves the purpose of criticizing Western civilization.<sup>12</sup>

As for the meeting between Foucault and Ōmori specifically, an interesting perspective has been given by Adrian Konik. According to him, Foucault decided to practice Zen with Ōmori, rather than with Buddhist teachers who were residing in France at the time (i.e., Taisen Deshimaru and Thich Nhat Hanh),<sup>13</sup> in virtue of specific features of the former. Konik suggests that Ōmori’s Zen, which had strong political aims oriented towards the imperial restoration, could be seen as in part opposed to the Western disciplinary/bio-power of Euro-American heavily influenced post-war Japan; furthermore, he argues that the warrior-like rhetoric of Ōmori and his Zen contemporaries, alongside with their politicization of Zen (which involved complex disciplinary dynamics), could have been of high interest for Foucault.<sup>14</sup> I will thus elaborate on the topic considering this already existing scholarship, focusing on the reason behind it and its meaning for Foucault’s worldview; I will also try to offer a personal interpretation of Ōmori’s stance, starting from his own original texts. Confronting Konik’s view on the matter, I will propose a different viewpoint, also briefly considering the implications of a deep analysis of Ōmori’s work within contemporary Zen studies.

<sup>6</sup> Lazreg, *Foucault’s Orient*, 199.

<sup>7</sup> Gros, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 227.

<sup>8</sup> Defert, “Chronology,” 67.

<sup>9</sup> Foucault, “Michel Foucault et le zen,” 618.

<sup>10</sup> Siisiäinen, *Foucault, Biopolitics and Resistance*, 153–160.

<sup>11</sup> Schaub, “Foucault’s Oriental Subtext,” 307.

<sup>12</sup> Schaub, “Foucault’s Oriental Subtext,” 315.

<sup>13</sup> Konik, “Reconsidering Foucault’s dialogue with Buddhism,” 47.

<sup>14</sup> Konik, “Reconsidering Foucault’s dialogue with Buddhism,” 48.

## 2. Subjectivities and Bodies

In the short preface to the transcript in *Dits et écrits*, it is said that Foucault started developing his interest in Zen while working on Christianity,<sup>15</sup> focusing in particular on Christian mysticism:

I think Zen is totally different from Christian mysticism. And yet, I do think that Zen is a form of mysticism. [...] What is impressive regarding Christianity and its **technique**, is that one is always looking for more and more **individualization**. One tries to understand what is at the bottom of an **individual's** soul. "Tell me who you are," here lies the spirituality of Christianity. As far as Zen is concerned, it seems that all the **techniques** linked to spirituality, on the contrary, are intended to attenuate the **individual**. Zen and Christian mysticism are two things that cannot be compared, while the **technique** of Christian spirituality and the one of Zen are comparable. And here there is a big opposition.<sup>16</sup>

Both Christian mysticism and Zen are, in Foucault's own terminology, techniques of the self,<sup>17</sup> a kind of techniques that allow someone to operate on their own body, soul, thoughts and conducts in order to transform or modify themselves, so as to arrive at a sort of perfection state, happiness, purity, even gaining supernatural power.<sup>18</sup> This kind of techniques, for Foucault, is not made up by the individual, but constitute patterns that are proposed or imposed by culture or society.<sup>19</sup> In a dialogue with Moriaki Watanabe<sup>20</sup> that was held in July 1978, Foucault declared that Christianity played a key role in shaping Western subjectivity;<sup>21</sup> in his words, Christianity was so important because it formed the pattern for the modern creation of subjects, a pattern subsequently secularized by the modern forms of governing.<sup>22</sup> The aim of Foucault was then to find alternatives to this modern subject. Furthermore, following Nietzsche, Bataille, and Blanchot, Foucault thematized the idea of an experience capable of annihilating the subject.<sup>23</sup>

I would love to compare these Christian techniques with those of Buddhism or Eastern Asian ones; to compare techniques that look like each other to a certain point but may have a completely different result, because the rules of Buddhist spirituality aim to a deindividualization, to a desubjectivization, to really bring individuality to its limits and beyond its limits, so as to free the subject [...] That's the first point, the second point would be to be able to find people in far Eastern countries interested in this kind of issues, in order

<sup>15</sup> Foucault, "Michel Foucault et le zen," 618.

<sup>16</sup> Foucault, "Michel Foucault et le zen," 618; emphasis added.

<sup>17</sup> Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," 18–22.

<sup>18</sup> Foucault, "Sessualità e solitudine," 147–148. It is very important to notice that here Christianity and Buddhism are opposed once again, also in relation to the concept of Truth.

<sup>19</sup> Foucault, "The ethic of the care for the self as a practice of freedom," 11.

<sup>20</sup> Foucault, "La scène de la philosophie."

<sup>21</sup> Foucault, "La scène de la philosophie," 592–593.

<sup>22</sup> Cremonesi, Irrera, Lorenzini, "Introduction," 8.

<sup>23</sup> Trombadori, *Colloqui con Foucault*, 34–35 and 44–48.

to conduct studies, if possible simultaneously, or at least, crossing and echoing each other, about the disciplines of the bodies or the constitution of individuality.<sup>24</sup>  
 ...this dissolution of European subjectivity,<sup>25</sup> of the coercive subjectivity imposed upon us by our culture after the 19<sup>th</sup> century is still, I think, one of the challenges of the current fights. That is my interest in Zen Buddhism.<sup>26</sup>

As in the above-mentioned quotes, Foucault's aim was to use the experience of Zen techniques in order to deepen his concept of *techniques de soi* and advance the related genealogy of modern subjectivity on which he was focusing. A specific technique itself is what, in Foucault's own words, can be compared between two different cultural realities such as Christianity (i.e., Christian mysticism) and Zen. Foucault does not specify to which techniques he refers to. As for Zen, we can infer that the main technique considered by Foucault is *zazen*, being also the technique he practiced while at Seitaiji. *Zazen* is a type of silent meditation largely performed in Zen monasteries, assuming a crossed-leg position and, depending on one's sect, not focusing on a given object<sup>27</sup> but/or counting one's own breaths.<sup>28</sup> Lauri Siisiäinen, when studying Foucault's reflections on Zen, considers as Christian techniques the ones belonging to the Benedictine monastic order, such as the practices of obedience, humility and poverty, as well as praying and performing silent meditation (the latter being, as a form of self-investigation, substantially the only reference for Foucault).<sup>29</sup> Significantly, however, Foucault claimed that Christianity adopted techniques and practices both from Greco-Roman antiquity<sup>30</sup> and Asian spirituality<sup>31</sup>:

Christianity had in front of itself, or rather next to itself, behind itself, an intense model of religious life, which were Hindu monasticism and Buddhist monasticism, and the Christian monks who spread over the whole Mediterranean Orient starting from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century, who largely resumed ascetic practices.<sup>32</sup>

The results of his involvement with Zen practice were recalled by Foucault in these terms:

<sup>24</sup> Foucault, "La scène de la philosophie," 592–593.

<sup>25</sup> I.e., the Cartesian self. See: Foucault, "La scène de la philosophie," 590–593.

<sup>26</sup> Foucault, "La scène de la philosophie," 592.

<sup>27</sup> Ui, *Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary*, 334–335.

<sup>28</sup> Yamada, "Zazengi kōwa," 25. For Zen's seated meditation as intended by Ōmori Sōgen, see Ōmori, *Introduction to Zen Training* and Ōmori, "Suwaru."

<sup>29</sup> For a wider overview of the concept of Christian technique in Foucault, please refer to Siisiäinen, *Foucault, Biopolitics and Resistance*, 156–158.

<sup>30</sup> A privileged field of inquiry for Foucault, especially in relation to the concept of "care of the self" in the Greek/Roman antiquity. (Cf. Cremonesi, Irrera, Lorenzini, "Introduction," 8).

<sup>31</sup> Siisiäinen, *Foucault, Biopolitics and Resistance*, 155.

<sup>32</sup> Foucault, "Sexualité et pouvoir," 565.

If I could feel something through the posture of body in Zen meditation, that is to say the right posture of the body, it could be a new relationship that could exist between mind and body, and furthermore, a new relationship between the body and the external world.<sup>33</sup>

The statement of Foucault about a “new relationship between mind and body” becomes clearer when confronted with Ōmori's emphasis on the “oneness of mind and body” of Zen (which recurs repeatedly in his texts). In Ōmori's words, we could configure this experience in terms of learning Zen with one's own body (*shingakudō* 身学道),<sup>34</sup> so as to unify mind, body and breath:

Since *zenna* 禅那 (meditation) is thought as the process of unification with the mind, *zazen* is the state where breath, body and mind are unified or are becoming unified through sitting.<sup>35</sup>

*Zazen* posture, according to him, should be seen as a “purely physical method of regulating one's body” and Zen as the way of “regulating the mind.”<sup>36</sup> The other kind of new relationship that Foucault experienced, “the one between his body and the external world,” resonates in a passage where Ōmori speaks about a particular state during *zazen*, where “the whole body is lost and the distinction between sitter and surrounding is forgotten.”<sup>37</sup> After his practice, Foucault asked to Ōmori:

Europe's thought, education and social customs all share the idea that “mind and body” are separable. Through my experience of Zen, however [...] mind and body were one. Is this experience wrong?<sup>38</sup>

Ōmori examined the question and finally answered:

European view is wrong. In eastern thought, and especially in Zen, body and mind are unified. Your experience is correct.<sup>39</sup>

In conclusion, the “new body experience” constitutes the centrality of Foucault's Zen practice at Seitaiji in 1978. This is further clarified by Watanabe's question to Foucault, asking him if his Zen practice had the aim of “verifying on the spot that the meaning of the body in Zen practice is different [from that of Christianity]” with Foucault's answer that “Zen is a totally different religious exercise in which the body is grasped as a sort of instrument.”<sup>40</sup> Foucault's aim was neither to propose a factual replacement of the modern

<sup>33</sup> Foucault, “Michel Foucault et le zen,” 621.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Ōmori, “Suwaru,” 75.

<sup>35</sup> Ōmori, “Suwaru,” 58.

<sup>36</sup> Ōmori, *Introduction to Zen Training*, 23.

<sup>37</sup> Ōmori, *Introduction to Zen Training*, 96.

<sup>38</sup> Ōmori, *Zen no hassō*, 164.

<sup>39</sup> Ōmori, *Zen no hassō*, 164.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient*, 212.

subjectivity with Zen's subjectivity, but solely to prove the existence of other kinds of subjectivity rather than the modern one. "I am not looking for an alternative; you cannot find the solution of a problem in the solution of another problem raised at another moment by other people."<sup>41</sup> On the same lead: "I think that re-examinations [of Western thought] can be pursued confronting Western thought with Eastern thought, too."<sup>42</sup> Anyways Foucault, practicing *zazen*, allowed himself to "experience" firsthand a culturally different technique of the self (that is, a technique of the self codified by other people rather than the ones who "experience" modern subjectivity) upon himself, so to transform himself; all of this resulted into the already mentioned "experiences"<sup>43</sup> of "new relationships between body and mind and body and the external world."

### 3. About borders

Foucault expressed what he felt was the aim of Buddhism as "bringing individuality to its limits and beyond its limits."<sup>44</sup> Limit is a key word in order to understand the cultural otherness of Japan in Foucault's thought.<sup>45</sup> When asked if his interest in Japan was either deep or superficial, Foucault answered:

Honestly, I'm not constantly interested in Japan. My interest is the history of western rationality and its **limit**. About this point, Japan poses a problem that cannot be avoided, it is an illustration of it. Since Japan is an **enigma**, very difficult to decipher.<sup>46</sup>

In Foucault's view, there is some sort of connection between his idea of limit and Japan, which is situated beyond that limit, thus representing something that can't be easily understood. It becomes clearer when examining the 1961 preface of *History of Madness*, deleted in subsequent editions, where he describes the Orient as the inaccessible limit posed by western rationality.<sup>47</sup> As Marnia Lazreg notices, the Orient-Occident division is never questioned or problematized by Foucault.<sup>48</sup> The reason for this Western-posed divide, as Marnia Lazreg says, lies in Foucault's belief that a

Culture has limits internally, creating an exterior edge within its interior, and externally with another culture [...] Western culture draws two fundamental limits, one within itself,

<sup>41</sup> Michel Foucault, quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," 229. In this context the other people were the ancient Greeks.

<sup>42</sup> Foucault, "Michel Foucault et le zen," 622.

<sup>43</sup> I insist on the word *experience* because Foucault himself does so. See Foucault, "Michel Foucault et le zen," 624. It is also noticed in Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient*, 207.

<sup>44</sup> Foucault, "La scène de la philosophie," 592–593.

<sup>45</sup> Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient*, 192.

<sup>46</sup> Foucault, "Michel Foucault et le zen," 620; emphasis added.

<sup>47</sup> Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient*, 193.

<sup>48</sup> Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient*, 193.



between madness and reason, the other between Orient and Occident.<sup>49</sup>

However, this limit needs to be carefully analyzed. If the Western culture poses a limit to itself (the Orient), then what is the status of this limit, which is a limit to something that Foucault claims has become *universal* (so limitless)?<sup>50</sup> He says, for example:

Europe situates itself into a determined region of the world and into a specific historical era. That said, it presents the particular feature of having created a universal category that characterizes the modern world. Europe is the place of birth of universality.<sup>51</sup>

This quote seems to find a perfect answer in the statement by Naoki Sakai that “What we normally call ‘universalism’ is a particularism thinking itself as universalism, and it is worthwhile doubting whether universalism could ever exist otherwise.”<sup>52</sup> In fact, Foucault himself was, on a certain degree, aware of how Europe had universalized many of its concepts, extolling them from the historical and cultural context in which they were born.<sup>53</sup> However, as Marnia Lazreg notices:

Indeed, Foucault leaves unquestioned the “universal” character of the Western ratio. As Kobayashi suggests, “universal reason does not permit division.” In this sense, “Foucault positioned himself within Western history (and European societies). In so doing, he left in abeyance the significance, for the presumed universality of Western reason (itself a particular or regional reason), of the limits within itself.” To return to the quotation, Western reason establishes its universality through “colonization,” implicitly as if to compensate for the cultural division it makes and that it cannot resolve culturally.<sup>54</sup>

Interestingly, Foucault's idea of a crisis of Western thought is linked by him to the end of imperialism, that is, the end of the universalistic project;<sup>55</sup> in other words, I would argue that imaginary orientalist geography and its categories built by euro-American colonialism could no longer grasp the complexity of the world.

Sakai Naoki and Jon Solomon also stress the fact that Foucault's thought is characterized by “the construction of respective ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ regions with their corresponding ‘ways of thought’.”<sup>56</sup> This is due to what Sakai and Solomon call a “joint matrix, the recursive admixtures of world and thought”: a matrix they call “amphibological region.”<sup>57</sup> They describe Foucault's Europe as:

<sup>49</sup> Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient*, 194.

<sup>50</sup> Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient*, 196. On the same lead, Sakai and Solomon ask: “where would ‘outside Europe’ be in an age when ‘Europe’ is synonymous, as Foucault asserts, with the universal?.” Sakai and Solomon, “Introduction,” 14.

<sup>51</sup> Foucault, “Michel Foucault et le zen,” 623.

<sup>52</sup> Sakai, “Modernity and its Critique,” 98.

<sup>53</sup> Siisiäinen, *Foucault, Biopolitics and Resistance*, 152.

<sup>54</sup> Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient*, 196.

<sup>55</sup> Sakai and Solomon, “Introduction,” 5.

<sup>56</sup> Sakai and Solomon, “Introduction,” 5.

<sup>57</sup> Sakai and Solomon, “Introduction,” 17.

A definite geographical region and as a universal category of thought through which categories themselves appear. As such, the amphibological region corresponds exactly to what Foucault, in *The Order of Things* (*Les mots et les choses*), calls the ‘empirico-transcendental doublet’ that characterizes the emergence of Man as both subject and object of (self-)knowledge in the modern period. The amphibological region is, thus, precisely, the quintessential bio-political habitat corresponding to Foucault’s modern Man.<sup>58</sup>

It is possible to say, then, that going to Japan Foucault sees himself as a representative of the modern man (who belongs to the European amphibological region, a man characterized by a specific subjectivity) interacting with other people<sup>59</sup> of another amphibological region and with other kinds of subjectivity: specifically, the distinctive form of subjectivity of Zen.<sup>60</sup>

But Foucault was not the only one imagining a world composed into geographically divided regions, which were also the *loci* of specific ways of thinking. In Ōmori’s writings we find several claims explicitly recalling the ideas of a specific “western thought” and an “eastern thought.” For example, he outlines the different conceptions of the self that existed between East and West recalling Immanuel Kant and the Chan master Hyakujō Ekai 百丈懷海 (Ch. Baizhang Huaihai): if Kant’s self is the autonomous and rational self which is “the subject of the sacred moral laws because of its free independence,”<sup>61</sup> Hyakujō’s self:

is the subject which is one with Absolute Nothingness and has cut duality of before and after while dropping all fetters from mind and body. The difference between Hyakujo and Kant lies in this point. **Without detecting this difference it will be impossible to distinguish between the Eastern and the Western modes of thought.**<sup>62</sup>

Ōmori, however, says that Zen is a universal truth that could be equally recognized by both Westerners and Easterners. Answering Foucault’s question if Zen was separable from Buddhism, he stated as follows:

You have just said that you have felt a new relationship between the mind and the body and between the body and the external world. I find it admirable that you felt this with such a short experience with Zen. Feeling that the mind and the body become one, and that oneself and the world become one as well, aren’t these universal experiences? This shows that Zen has an international and universal character. Zen is small if only thought as part of Buddhism, but we don’t consider it a part of Buddhism. If you could understand Zen in this sense with your experience, I think you would be convinced of the universality of Zen.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Sakai and Solomon, “Introduction,” 5.

<sup>59</sup> Cf., again, to Foucault’s own words in Dreyfus, Rabinow, “On the Genealogy of Ethics,” 229.

<sup>60</sup> “Foucault located the specificity of Japan in Zen, which purportedly shapes a mind-set that distinguishes Japanese culture in spite of its Western-like modernity,” Lazreg, *Foucault’s Orient*, 202.

<sup>61</sup> Ōmori, *Introduction to Zen Training*, 174.

<sup>62</sup> Ōmori, *Introduction to Zen Training*, 174; emphasis added.

<sup>63</sup> Foucault, “Michel Foucault et le zen,” 622. See also Foucault, “M. Fūkō to zen,” 224–225. Whether

We have thus encountered an alternative universality from Foucault's European one: the universal experience of Zen. Ōmori often stresses this quoting Bernard Phillips, professor in the Religious Studies department of Temple University, with whom Ōmori declares to have had several agreements on Zen:<sup>64</sup>

There is no true world religion except for Zen. Undoubtedly, many other religions claimed to be "world religions," but they have all been affected by a specific time, place and regional feature. They all made the mistake of absolutizing a specific method or belief. Since the eyes of modern humanity gaze at the infinite and at the universe that is expanding everywhere without obstacles, the religion it needs should also have a center expanding everywhere like its universe, and this center should have peripheries in no place.<sup>65</sup>

Although Ōmori also thought that meditation was something common to both East and West,<sup>66</sup> one of Ōmori's teachers, Tanouye Tenshin 田上天心, claimed that there was nothing close to *shugyō* 修行 (proper training) in the West, and therefore asked Ōmori to introduce it there. This request was concretized in the establishment of Chōzenji, "a place of Zen training where people of any race, creed or religion who are determined to live in accordance with Buddha Nature (the Inner Self or the Way) may fulfill this need through intensive endeavor."<sup>67</sup> Ōmori also appears to be conscious of Zen's overall condition in Europe and America, and how much importance a Japanese master teaching *zazen* could have in its spreading. He quotes Trevor Leggett, head of the BBC's Japanese service and expert of Japanese culture and martial arts:

"What we expect from Japan is something new that has never been developed in the West." [...] People involved in Zen teaching do not explain in detail how to do *zazen*, but only the principles, and because of this there are very few Zen centres. "Not only that, but there was also not anyone who could follow his (author note: D.T. Suzuki) lead." Therefore, the seeds were sown, but the gardeners who look after the land are rare. As a result, many foreigners read Suzuki's writings, creating personalized forms of Zen. Some are far from Japanese Zen. Together with "pure Zen," there are several weeds growing in the garden [...] "Pure Zen" is the aforementioned group of Japanese Zen masters who travel abroad so as to provide direct teaching, and the "weedy" Zen could stand for the hippie-way "reading Suzuki and making up a personalized Zen."<sup>68</sup>

Ōmori believed that the modern West needed a deep change that only Zen could give.<sup>69</sup> He was strongly critical of the modern man and of his idea of self:

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Foucault could have agreed on the universality of Zen as exposed by Ōmori or not is opened to debate. See Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient*, 207 and Siisiäinen, *Foucault, Biopolitics and Resistance*, 161.

<sup>64</sup> Besides the following quotes, Phillips is also mentioned in Hosokawa, *Ōmori Sōgen*, 86 and Ōmori, *Introduction to Zen Training*, 251–253 about the same topics.

<sup>65</sup> Ōmori, "Suwaru," 52. Ōmori is cautious in calling Zen a religion, carefully explaining in which terms Zen can be defined as such in Ōmori, *Introduction to Zen Training*, 253–254.

<sup>66</sup> Hosokawa, *Ōmori Sōgen*, 113, and Ōmori, *Introduction to Zen Training*, 9–12.

<sup>67</sup> Hosokawa, *Ōmori Sōgen*, 77–78.

<sup>68</sup> Ōmori, "Suwaru," 53–54.

<sup>69</sup> Ōmori, *Zen no hassō*, 165–166.

If one experiences this [Zen's ultimate realization], modern man's present ideology will naturally be criticized. But by being criticized, change will take place. [...] Just simple theory, however, is not enough. It is necessary to have physical experience behind it. If you experience this, the view that only man is the center of the universe (in exclusion to others also being the center) will become absurd.<sup>70</sup>

The self of the modern man is, I argue, not what Ōmori called Hyakujō's self but what he called Kant's self: the western self.

Contrary to our expectation that the epoch-making development of science and technology would bring about the most supreme blessings to human beings, the modern world has begun to reveal itself as the most disturbed period unprecedented in the history of the human race. [...] At this turn of our era, we must go beyond the age of science in order to ask anew what human beings are and to inquire into our true selves.<sup>71</sup>

Ōmori could find in people like Phillips reasons to believe that the West needed Zen. He writes:

Westerners were attracted by Zen because it "seemed to offer a possible solution" to their four hundred years old spiritual hunger.<sup>72</sup> I think that this should be kept in mind by those who reflect on how things are going in Zen. In other terms, until now Zen has been conceived as a path to liberate oneself from the ideas of life and death, emancipating from the personal suffering of life, ageing, illness, and death; but now the thing is that there are people who seek in Zen the liberation from social suffering that cannot be cured addressing personal issues only. Professor Phillips writes that the spiritual starvation of western people is caused by the corrosive effects of modern disciplines and the modern way of life on the traditional religions of the West. To put it simply, I think that this is more a civilizational issue than a personal one.<sup>73</sup>

Thus, when Foucault asked:

In Europe, there is the idea that "Nature and Humankind are separated," and humans are the subjects that conquer nature. Through my experience, man and nature were one. How so?<sup>74</sup>

It was then natural for Ōmori to answer that:

Humankind conquering nature is their presumption.<sup>75</sup> European way of thinking is just the thought of a humanity that for four hundred years has lost God.<sup>76</sup> As Bakunin said in his book *God and the State*, mankind has pulled God down from its throne, and has put itself

<sup>70</sup> Hosokawa, *Ōmori Sōgen*, 88–89.

<sup>71</sup> Ōmori, *Introduction to Zen Training*, 254.

<sup>72</sup> This is something that Phillips claimed.

<sup>73</sup> Ōmori, "Suwaru," 51.

<sup>74</sup> Ōmori, *Zen no hassō*, 164–165.

<sup>75</sup> In particular, in Buddhism *zōjōman* 増上慢 means to think to be enlightened without actually being it.

<sup>76</sup> *Kami* 神.

on its place. This is the false anthropocentrism. Because of that nature is polluted and, contrary to every expectation, humankind is close to death. Thus, some people, as life scientists, started to notice the errors of modern civilization, and began using the term “ecosystem.” Surely, humans can only live in an ecosystem, and that is the correct thought, the correct knowledge.<sup>77</sup>

The criticism towards modern civilization is the criticism of the West, of the culture that produced the modern man who, reading Phillips, Ōmori learnt (or confirmed) was needing of the universal spiritual guidance of Zen.<sup>78</sup> Ōmori even suggests that Zen should change its focus from the traditional Buddhist domain of liberating from the sorrows of life and death to solving wider social issues. Using Konrad Lorenz's “Eight deadly sins of humanity” as representatives of modern global issues of his times, Ōmori asks:

Should not Zen, in principle, being a universal religion, also take responsibility for answering these problems? [...] I think Professor Lorenz's “eight deadly sins of humanity” could be solved by this awakening of Buddha and a committed spiritual life based on it, right?<sup>79</sup>

And finally, coming to Foucault:

That such a respected philosopher would have a realization will be the reason for a qualitative change in the modern civilization of Europe. [...] This sense of oneness which Foucault experienced is what Zen can contribute to modern society.<sup>80</sup>

Following Sakai and Solomon, I argue that we can configure Foucault's Japanese and Zen experiences as encounters, dialogues between individuals who pose themselves as *fixed subject positions*, where participants see themselves as national and civilizational subjects.<sup>81</sup> These fixed subject positions are not built up as a monologue,<sup>82</sup> but as a dialogical conversation between the subjects themselves and a mutual agreement of each other.<sup>83</sup> It is a Zen monk who firstly introduces the theme of the “crisis of the Western thought” and “how can Eastern thought contribute to it” when talking with Foucault;<sup>84</sup> it was Foucault that questioned Ōmori about the universality of Zen and about the different conceptions of mind/body and nature in Europe and Japan, leading Ōmori to ask himself:

<sup>77</sup> Ōmori, *Zen no hassō*, 165.

<sup>78</sup> Hosokawa, *Ōmori Sōgen*, 87–88.

<sup>79</sup> Ōmori, “Suwaru,” 52.

<sup>80</sup> Hosokawa, *Ōmori Sōgen*, 87.

<sup>81</sup> Hosokawa, *Ōmori Sōgen*, 16.

<sup>82</sup> Miyake, *Mostri del Giappone*, 34.

<sup>83</sup> Miyake, *Mostri del Giappone*, 34.

<sup>84</sup> Foucault, “Michel Foucault et le zen,” 622.

Isn't it wonderful that someone as Doctor Foucault could speak openly about his doubts concerning Western civilization, write and ask questions and approaching Eastern thought looking for a "change of civilization?"<sup>85</sup>

What I argue is that the fixed subject positions in Foucault-Ōmori encounter are constructed in a complex mirrors-like identity game, where the Orientalized tried to declare their own autonomous identity confirming and responding to the orientalism of the "Orientalizers" and vice-versa.<sup>86</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

Foucault's trip to Japan is summarized by Marnia Lazreg, quoting Yasuo Kobayashi, saying that

"Foucault encountered the Orient, the Oriental, the Asian, the Japanese. But in the end he could not refine his view (perhaps due to lack of time), his methodology, and really work on the 'limit' [...] Japan may not even have been the Orient he was looking for." What he was looking for was perhaps, in Kobayashi's view, "the body," the elusive yet tangible body in Zen as ushering in the unrealizable knowledge of the Orient.<sup>87</sup>

Following this quote, in line with the first part of this paper, I argue that the cornerstone of this experience is what we can call the Zen body, the set of new relationships between body and mind and between body and external world that Foucault claimed to have experienced while undergoing the strict exercise of *zazen*.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, in the context of the orientalist borders set by the two parts of the encounter, I argue that the experience of the Zen body holds a particular status between the amphibological regions of this imaginary geography.<sup>89</sup> During meditation Foucault relaxed his fixed subject position, transforming himself in the attempt of reaching a proximity point, a common ground with the ones he was encountering.

I will now try to examine carefully Konik's thesis that Foucault, somehow, could have preferred Ōmori's Zen to the one taught by the Buddhist masters living in France at the time because of the underlying political implications of the former. It has to be considered that, on one hand, Foucault declared that his interest was mainly in "the life in a Zen temple," where "a whole different mentality from ours is formed,"<sup>90</sup> and it is reported that he was brought to Seitaiji by the French embassy;<sup>91</sup> since Foucault never expressed any reason which would have led him to choose Ōmori instead of other Zen masters, and we have no hint that Foucault was aware of recent Zen history (something

<sup>85</sup> Ōmori, *Zen no hassō*, 165–166.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Miyake, *Mostri del Giappone*, 34.

<sup>87</sup> Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient*, 239.

<sup>88</sup> See also Sakai and Solomon, "Introduction," 17.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Miyake, *Mostri del Giappone*.

<sup>90</sup> Foucault, "Michel Foucault et le zen," 618.

<sup>91</sup> Hosokawa, *Ōmori Sōgen*, 89, Defert, "Chronology," 67 and Ōmori *Zen no hassō*, 164.

that became known outside of Japan only with relatively recent scholarship), I think we can conclude that Foucault simply wanted to see a *Japanese Zen temple in Japan*, and thus there was no point for him in engaging with the Buddhist masters that were living in France.

On the other hand, Konik rightfully includes Ōmori within what Robert Sharf (one of Konik's main references for Zen history, alongside with Brian Victoria and Bernard Faure) identified as a "contemporary Zen discourse," strongly tied with nationalist politics; certainly, Ōmori cannot escape the accusation of nationalism, having been active in violent far-right groups.<sup>92</sup> While Konik mainly focuses on Ōmori's and his contemporaries' usage of Zen as a political weapon,<sup>93</sup> broadening the context in which Ōmori operated considering other cultural aspects may deepen the research. I would add that the similarities between Ōmori and such discourse are even more evident when considering how Ōmori was, somehow, trying to adapt Zen to the modern age proposing it as a spiritual solution to the problems of modernity and its spiritual "anxiety."<sup>94</sup> Moreover, this discourse stresses the idea that Zen should be considered as a non-sectarian mystical experience<sup>95</sup> and inverts the old orientalist stereotypes in favour of Japan and "the East."<sup>96</sup> Figures such as Hisamatsu Shin'ichi and D.T. Suzuki<sup>97</sup> (who, according to Sharf, was the main proposer of such discourse), were in fact acquaintances of Ōmori (as Konik remarks<sup>98</sup>). However, one interesting thing to notice is that Sharf argues that

D. T. Suzuki, Nishitani Keiji, and Abe Masao, [...] all lacked formal transmission in a Zen lineage, and their intellectualized Zen is often held in suspicion by Zen traditionalists. We should be cautious before uncritically accepting their claim that Zen is some sort of nonsectarian spiritual gnosis, for such a claim is clearly self-serving: by insisting that Zen is a way of experiencing the world, rather than a complex form of Buddhist monastic practice, these Japanese intellectuals effectively circumvent the question of their own authority to speak on behalf of Zen.<sup>99</sup>

But Ōmori, who was a high representative of "institutional Zen," nonetheless promoted Zen as a universal experience, thus it would be worth considering further research on the topic outside Zen laity.<sup>100</sup> In any case, while surely figures such as Ōmori had strong

<sup>92</sup> Victoria, *Zen War Stories*, 39–66.

<sup>93</sup> Konik, "Reconsidering Foucault's dialogue with Buddhism," 50.

<sup>94</sup> Sharf, "Whose Zen?," 49–50.

<sup>95</sup> Sharf, "Whose Zen?," 44.

<sup>96</sup> Sharf, "Whose Zen?," 48. It should be noted that Hori (in Hori, "D.T. Suzuki and the Invention of Tradition") contextualizes Suzuki's attitude of privileging Japan and Zen as a response to the orientalist scholars who claimed authority above Buddhism and to Euro-American colonialist aims.

<sup>97</sup> Hosokawa, *Ōmori Sōgen*, 68–70.

<sup>98</sup> Konik, "Reconsidering Foucault's dialogue with Buddhism," 45.

<sup>99</sup> Sharf, "Whose Zen?," 43.

<sup>100</sup> It should also be noted that Sharf's thematization of "Zen experience" as a XXth century invention drawn from Euro-American influences has been criticized by scholars such as Victor Sōgen Hori in Hori, "D.T. Suzuki and the Invention of Tradition," 55–57, who claims that far from being a modern invention, the idea of Zen as an experience is in fact traditional, and Stephan Kigensan Licha in Licha, "Hara Tanzan and the Japanese Buddhist discovery of 'Experience,'" who argues that the concept of experience was

political interests, a more complex analysis would help avoiding an “ideological reductionist”<sup>101</sup> approach to contemporary Zen.

In conclusion, I think that Foucault’s encounter with Ōmori offers a great example in acknowledging the stereotyped fixed subject positions on which certain dialogues are based. But such stereotyped encounters are, after all, just first encounters, and thus constitute a first form of overcoming the imaginary borders posed by historical and social constructions.<sup>102</sup> I argue that, somehow, Ōmori tried to adapt Zen to the modern times reworking orientalist tropes, using them as a tool for making Zen known to the world in a particular historical context, in a similar fashion to D.T. Suzuki himself.<sup>103</sup> Foucault and Ōmori’s encounter gives us a hint in order to cross those borders: the firsthand body experience that, maybe, could help forming the ground for a better understanding of human beings within their cultural diversity.

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already being sustained by figures such as Hara Tanzan (1819–1892) and emerged as an intercultural product of local Japanese and overseas influences.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Hori, “D.T. Suzuki and the Invention of Tradition,” 62: “the concept of satori has an ideological use and can be used strategically for political ends. However, I add a methodological caution: the fact that a statement has an ideological function does not mean it is otherwise meaningless. To always ignore the content of a statement and to insist that it has meaning only as ideology would be ideological reductionism.”

<sup>102</sup> Miyake, *Mostri del Giappone*, 130.

<sup>103</sup> Ogawa, *Goroku no shisō-shi*, 409.



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## **For Want of a Disciple:**

**Personnel Challenges Among Kantō Area Buddhist Temples in the  
Early Modern Period**

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**Abstract**

Even though modern scholars do not closely adhere to the model of Buddhist “decline” during Japan’s early modern period (1600–1868), the effects of this interpretation continue to influence topics of research and our perspectives of the Buddhist clergy during that time frame. One such example is our understanding of the experiences of non-famous, non-elite clerics who lived in temples across rural Japan. Although new studies of clerical networks and temple economics have gained traction in recent years, other aspects of clerical life still merit further attention. Drawing upon data presented by recent research, this paper delves into the ramifications of one challenge: the need to find and train disciples in the mid-18th to early 19th centuries, a period when economic and social changes affected family dispositions of younger sons who might have been put up for ordination. It will start with a brief survey of these transformations, and then it will survey recruiting issues and the processes involved with clerical advancement. These discussions are punctuated with examples of problematic youths whose choice to enter the clergy was not theirs to make. While it is easy to dismiss such cases as further evidence of moral turpitude within the clergy, this paper argues that we must study this element of clerical life as a social issue. It also argues that the heretofore focus on clerical decline has marginalized the efforts of rural abbots to maintain their temples and communities in the face of such challenges.

# For Want of a Disciple:

## Personnel Challenges Among Kantō Area Buddhist Temples in the Early Modern Period

Alexander VESEY

**Keywords:** Disciples, Training, Childhood, Social transformation, Rural Buddhist temples

### 1. Introduction

As Orion Klautau notes in his study of Meiji era interpretations of early modern Japanese Buddhism, present research projects on this topic are no longer bound by the interpretative constraints of the “theory of [Buddhism’s] decline” (*darakuron* 墮落論) that informed anti-Buddhist polemics from the mid-1800s onwards. Although he was not the only advocate, the prominent historian Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之助 (1877–1955) is often most associated with this perspective, and thus post-war scholars have been motivated by the goal of “overcoming Tsuji.”<sup>1</sup> This revision of perspective has motivated new studies of early modern religion and politics, clerical intellectual endeavors and education, and the complex networks and practices that operated between religious figures (including Buddhist clerics) and peasant communities. Furthermore, whereas earlier studies focused on individual clerics who were lauded for resisting the overall trend of increasing decadence (for example, Jiun Onkō 慈雲飲光 [1718–1805] and Hakuin Ekaku 白隠慧鶴 [1686–1769]), better access to data in local archives provides the means for more nuanced views of other Buddhist clerical lives and experiences.

These same local sources also hold the potential for new insights on the difficult challenges that confronted the rural abbots who comprised the largest segment of early modern Buddhist organizations. A case in point is the growing body of data indicating a pronounced decline in village-level clerical populations in the greater Kantō region from the mid-1700 onwards. This led to increasing numbers of abbot-less (*mujū* 無住) temples that appear in organization network lists (*honmatsuchō* 本末帳) maintained by regional head temples (*honji* 本寺). The “decline theory” argued that early modern Buddhist corruption arose from clerical avarice at urban temples and the abuse of samurai

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<sup>1</sup> Klautau, “Against the Ghosts of Recent Past,” 264–268.

anti-Christian/anti-heterodoxy policies to extract financial benefits from *danka* 檀家 lay families who were obligated to support the clergy in exchange for clerical certification of their compliance with these codes. While such cases did exist, local archives provide evidence that the rising strata of newly wealthy and thus economically empowered elite farming families (*gōnō* 豪農) used their growing stature in village life to play the role of peasant patrons who exerted their own agency in clerical-lay interactions.<sup>2</sup> In practice, rising vacancy rates led to increased clerical reliance upon active lay participation in temple management practices.<sup>3</sup>

The lack of sufficient personnel naturally raises questions about the causes of this trend and its effect on clerical networks in areas where it occurred. Building upon earlier studies of empty temples, this paper takes up these issues to consider the implications of such population pressures for clerical leaders who were charged with maintaining the integrity of Buddhist sectarian networks in rural communities. I will begin with a short survey of data taken from studies of the Kantō and then move to consider the impact of larger early modern demographic and socio-cultural shifts on clerical recruitment. From there I will use several case studies involving problematic disciples of rural abbots to examine the personnel challenges that confronted temple abbots in the mid- to late- early modern period.

The examples of problematic clerics naturally evoke the specter of a Tsuji-esque vision and support for the decline model. There is no denying the examples of lax clerics that appear in local records, and the case studies no doubt reenforce the overall import of the earlier view that there were serious issues among early modern clerical communities. However, that interpretation's focus on willful acts of clerical greed and lust makes an implicit argument for a pervasive culture of degeneracy at all Buddhist temples, and it does not consider the impact of larger social trends and transformations on Buddhist recruitment practices. Furthermore, the decline model does not consider efforts by local clerical leaders who struggled with the management of problematic individuals within their temples. By drawing upon insights from six decades of research on early modern economic developments, social changes and cultural transformations like the spread of literacy among commoner elites, this paper seeks to offer a more nuanced explanation for Buddhist clerical problems that appear in historical records.

## 2. The State and Implication of Empty Abbacies

To start with a brief overview of Buddhist networking principles, rural temples were organized into tiers based on a ranking system. At the top were “head temples” (*honji* 本寺) and their abbots performed the following functions: the management of their networks of subordinated temples; acting as liaisons between their subordinates and higher clerical authorities at sectarian headquarters (*honzan* 本山) and the special “liaison temples” (*firegashira* 触頭) in or near Edo that handled many administrative

<sup>2</sup> Vesey, “Peasants as Clients and Patrons of Buddhism in Early Modern Village Life.”

<sup>3</sup> Hōzawa, *Bakuhan kenryoku to jidan seido*.

matters; and, depending on the school, the running of local training halls (*danrin* 檀林) for *shoke* 所化 (ordinands who had trained for several years under their ordination masters prior to entering a *danrin*). Under the head temples were one or more layers of “branches” (*matsuji* 末寺). These temples were fully accredited as sites of a head temple’s Dharma lineage (*hōryū* 法流), and thus their abbots were empowered to recruit and initially train disciples, and to lead funeral/memorial services. Given this latter right, the majority of village lay families had formal “funeral *danka*” (*metsuzai danka* 滅罪檀家) affiliation with branches, which meant they were obligated to financially support these temples in exchange for the abbot’s certification of their religious registry (*shūmon aratamechō* 宗門改帳).

While the head-branch and temple-funeral *danka* relationships have both received extensive treatment in studies of early modern Buddhism, there was a numerically extensive lower layer in these hierarchies that has not drawn as much attention, particularly in non-Japanese scholarship. These entities were known as *monto* 門徒 (“followers”) in the Tendai and Shingon schools, while other schools such as Jōdo and Sōtō called them *heisōchi* 平僧地 (“common cleric’s site”).<sup>4</sup> As suggested by such nomenclature, these bottom strata consisted of small temples that were in the system but not recognized as a lineage site. Their abbots were not permitted to train disciples or to conduct funeral services; therefore, they had few funeral *danka*, and often their fiscal viability depended upon small land holdings that might be rented out.

In the case of Shingon and Tendai *monto*, this scarcity of resources could be partially off-set by support from “prayer” (*kitō* 祈禱) *danka* that patronized a temple for rituals that provided protections against fire, illness and other afflictions of daily life.<sup>5</sup> Branches and *monto* could have both kinds of *danka* families, although the ratio of funeral vs. prayer was usually greater at branches. For this reason, temples including *monto* that did not have funeral *danka*, and thus their activities centered on votive practices, were also called “prayer” temples (*kitōji* 祈禱寺). Prayer families did not carry financial burden of a funeral *danka* house, but at least in some regions, their association with a *monto* evolved into a formal relationship that was recognized by secular and clerical authorities. This position gave prayer *danka* a say in temple management issues along with the funeral *danka*, although it also meant that these *danka*, too, could not easily break their relationship with their prayer temples.<sup>6</sup>

These institutional ranking limitations also affected the careers of their residents. Following their ordination and years in training, a *shoke* who met their school’s certification criteria could eventually attain the abbacy of a prominent branch or head temple. However, regardless of their personal attainments, the limits placed on *monto/heisōchi* functions applied to their abbots as well, such that even a fully certified cleric who happened to reside in a *monto* did not have the rights and privileges accorded to those posted to a branch.

<sup>4</sup> Tanaka covers many aspects of these lowest level temples (Tanaka, *Kinsei chihō jūin keieishi no kenkyū*).

<sup>5</sup> The general term for these wishes was “worldly benefits” (*genze riyaku* 現世利益).

<sup>6</sup> Hōzawa, *Bakuhān kenryoku to jidan seido*, 282–283.

In theory, Buddhist sectarian communities were well integrated into transregional and trans-domain networks that united elite headquarters in the Kyoto/Nara region with even the lowliest temples in small villages. These structures were the organizational basis of the clergy's legal status (*mibun* 身分) within early modern society.<sup>7</sup> Based on the figures in head-branch registries, there were thousands of Buddhist temples in the Kantō provinces. In the upper part of Musashi, in what is now Saitama Prefecture, the figure was 3363.<sup>8</sup> However, recent studies of Kantō area temple archives now suggest the Buddhist clerical presence was less substantial than it might appear on paper. Tanaka Yōhei has recently highlighted this discrepancy with a series of surveys of abbatial lists produced by head temple administrators.<sup>9</sup> To summarize some of his data points:

According to a Bunsei 文政 13 (1830) register at the Nichiren school's Hondoji 本土寺 (in Matsuo, modern Chiba Prefecture), ten out of thirty-nine branches (20%) did not have abbots. Six of these had less than twenty *danka* families and small landholdings valued at under 7.5 *koku* 石 of rice production.<sup>10</sup>

Comparing data on thirty-four prayer temples supervised by the prominent Tendai regional head Senmyōji 千妙寺, all were staffed in Genbun 元文 3 (1738) but that number fell to twenty in An'ei 安永 5 (1776), and then to only eighteen in Kansei 寛政 2 (1790). Here, too, weak finances were the main cause of the decline in abbatial numbers.<sup>11</sup>

Myōjōin 明星院 was a major Shingi Shingon temple in the upper Musashi region and according to Tenmei 天明 7 (1787) data, it supervised twenty-one branches (one was empty), and fifty-nine *monto* (twenty-eight empty). Most of these *monto* were established as administrators (*bettō* 別当) of village tutelary shrines (*chinju* 鎮守).<sup>12</sup> In a later Ka'ei 嘉永 1 (1848) survey of twenty-nine *monto*, only six had abbots.<sup>13</sup>

Sōrinji 雙林寺 was a prominent Sōtō temple that supervised networks in Kōzuke 上野 Province (modern Gunma Prefecture) and regions to the north. Mid-18<sup>th</sup> century temple registries stated Kōzuke had 429 Sōtō school sites of all ranks. In a Tenpō 天保 14 (1843) survey of empty abbaties compiled by its abbot, fifty branches lacked abbots, and the

<sup>7</sup> Vesey, "Clerical Agency and the Formation of Buddhist Organizations in the Early Modern Period."

<sup>8</sup> SSKT 4: 882. The chart on this SSKT page lists a total of 3791, but this includes 428 temples affiliated with Shugendō networks. I have removed these non-Buddhist temples to obtain 3363. A footnote also states that some of the tallies here do not match those from an earlier edition of the prefectural history.

<sup>9</sup> Tanaka, *Kinsei chihō jūin keieishi no kenkyū*.

<sup>10</sup> Tanaka, *Kinsei chihō jūin keieishi no kenkyū*, 32–36. One *koku* is 180.39 liters; supposedly it was enough to supply one person for a year. Of course, rice alone was not sufficient to maintain the abbot's health, and this figure is the purported productive value of the land. The actual income depended on the fluctuating rice market and any income from the rental of productive lands to local peasants. Judging from the 1830 Hondoji records, five branch temples managed to support a resident cleric, but it was a financial challenge at others.

<sup>11</sup> Tanaka, *Kinsei chihō jūin keieishi no kenkyū*, 70–71.

<sup>12</sup> Since these temples had few funerary *danka* and were established as shrine administrators for the worship of protective deities, their widespread existence indicates the building of these rural Buddhist temples was due to local faith and effective proselytization activities by Shingi clerics, and not to Buddhist participation in the suppression of heterodoxies like Christianity.

<sup>13</sup> Tanaka, *Kinsei chihō jūin keieishi no kenkyū*, 196–205.



average duration of these vacancies was eighteen years. In the same period, another survey revealed sixty empty *heisōji*. (According to Tanaka, differences in the collection of data suggests Sōtō leadership was particularly worried about the vacancies at the more important branches, which indicates they had a lower regard for *heisōji*.)<sup>14</sup>

In addition to this data, Hōzawa Naohide's study of Shingi Shingon networks in Awa 阿波 (modern Chiba Prefecture) includes research on vacant abbacy lists compiled in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There were at least 253 temples in the province. According to a 1843 survey submitted by the regional head Hōjuin 宝珠院, 113 sites lacked an abbot. Some of these had been un-staffed for decades and many had fallen into varying degrees of disrepair.<sup>15</sup>

Similar findings appear in Higurashi Yoshiaki's detailed survey of the network supervised by Daihiganji 大悲願寺, a Shingi Shingon head temple in modern Akiruno あきる野市 (Tokyo Metropolitan Area). All totaled there were ten branches, nineteen *monto*, and three subtemples within Daihiganji's precincts.<sup>16</sup> In Kyōhō 享保 6 (1721), all of the branches were staffed, with seven of them having two clerics in residence (the abbot and a disciple or retired cleric; Daihiganji alone had four disciples in residence), and thirteen *monto* also had abbots (three of them had two clerics in residence.) Furthermore, eight of the branches listed the presence lay-staff (again Daihiganji had the most with eight laymen) as well as villagers who resided in the area before the temple precincts. Subsequent surveys were conducted in 1732, 1756, 1816 (data appears to be limited), 1822, 1840, 1852, and 1864. Judging from these lists, Daihiganji and its three largest branches maintained stable populations with at least two clerics apiece, but the other seven branches began to experience declines in residency to one cleric only (i.e., the abbot without a disciple in training), and four were vacant in either 1840 or 1856. For the *monto*, staffing conditions were more severe: between 1756 and 1822, all the abbacies became vacant, and only a very few were maintained by clerical caretakers.

Records at Shingi temple of Yakuōin 薬王院 on Mt. Takao show a similar trend. A Kansei 1 (1787) register of temple residents for Yakuōin and fourteen of its seventeen branches shows that Yakuōin alone had an abbot and two disciples. Another three subordinates had a resident abbot and one disciple; two others had both active and retired abbots but no disciples; five had only an abbot (again, there were no potential successors in residence); and five were staffed by caretakers.<sup>17</sup> The list does not provide information on three other branches.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Tanaka, *Kinsei chihō jūin keieishi no kenkyū*, 162–170.

<sup>15</sup> Hōzawa, *Bakuhān kenryoku to jidan seido*, 137–146.

<sup>16</sup> Higurashi “Shingi Shingonshū inaka honji Daihigan to sono monmatsu ni kansuru kisoteki kenkyū,” 86.

<sup>17</sup> *TYM* 2: 81–83.

<sup>18</sup> Yoshioka provides general information on Yakuōin's network (Yoshioka, “Kinsei jūin ni okeru monmatsu chitsujo to chiiki no ronri.”). Other evidence on the prominent numbers of *monto* in Shingi systems appears in Kushida Ryōkō's survey of Shingi network lists for the whole of Musashi (including what is now the Tokyo Metropolitan area as well as Saitama) that were compiled in 1675. These documents show there were 3107 temples in the province. Separated by kind, their numbers were: 220 heads; 258 branches; and 2629 *monto* (Kushida, *Shingon mikkyō seiritsu katei no kenkyū*, 1011). Udaka

Looking at another Tendai source, Kitain 喜多院 was the most prominent cloister within the precincts of Muryōjuji 無量寿寺 in Kawagoe 川越 (modern Saitama Prefecture), and its abbots kept diaries of temple affairs including the *Administrator's Records* (*Chijiroku* 知事録) from the 1780s until the 1850s. An entry for the first day of Bunsei 3 (1820) noted that vacant branches and *monto* of Nakain 中院 (another cloister) were not required to make monetary gift at New Years. According to the diary, two out of Nakain's twenty-four branches and nineteen of its *monto* were vacant. Among another ten *monto*, five had caretakers and only five had seated abbots.<sup>19</sup>

While not exhaustive, the appearance of similar data within these different Kantō-area Buddhist networks suggests two common and closely interwoven trends during the latter half of the early modern period, one of which was temple impoverishment. If a temple had few funeral *danka* families who were obligated to provide donations of money and goods (*dantoku* 壇徳), it might balance the books with income from renting temple lands to local farmers, but those without such resources faced severe economic challenges.<sup>20</sup> Gifts from prayer *danka* were another vital source of income, but as Tanaka shows in his study of Senmyōji's *kitōji* prayer temples, these *danka* numbers were also low, hence the overall small fiscal bases of these *monto* could often only provide limited support for a full-time abbot.<sup>21</sup> Under such circumstances, it was also difficult to replace buildings lost to fire or age, which further eroded a temple's sustainability as a viable site of Buddhist activities.

Impositions by regional heads and headquarters placed further burdens on constrained finances. As temples of some prominence, these elite institutions often received grants of tax-exempt lands from Tokugawa and domain lords, but the head temples nonetheless expected annual gifts from their subordinates. Even higher ranked temples in Edo and the Kansai issued their own requests for funds whenever they rebuilt their halls, performed special memorial services for school founders, etc. Abbots of well-appointed branches and *monto* could meet such demands, but their poorer brethren were severely pressed, and if necessary they had to draw upon saved money (*shidōkin* 祠堂金) to meet these obligations.<sup>22</sup> As I shall discuss below, it was possible for

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and Tokunaga's study of the network supervised by Sokushōin 息障院 (in modern Saitama Prefecture.) shows it consisted of nineteen branches and seventy-eight *monto* (Udaka and Tokunaga, *Musashi Yoshimi Sokushōin monjō*, 208–212).

<sup>19</sup> KN 4: 162–163. While it was only one of several cloisters that were created at Muryōjuji during the medieval period, Kitain assumed overall control of the precincts once its abbot Nankōbō Tenkai 南光坊天海 (1536?–1643) became an advisor to Tokugawa Ieyasu, and the cloister received patronage from Kasuga no Tsubone 春日局 (1579–1643; the wetnurse of the second shogun Hidetada 秀忠). The *Administrator's Record* and other accounts were compiled into the *Daily Record of Kitain* (*Kitain nikkān* 喜多院日鑑). An earlier petition for the relief of Nakain's empty *monto* was submitted in the last days of Bunka 文化 15/Bunsei 1 (the names changed in 1818) (KN 3: 416). There was no mention of it in the following year, but the 1820 approval strongly suggests continuing financial problems in the Nakain network.

<sup>20</sup> Tanaka, *Kinsei chihō jūin keieishi no kenkyū*, 71–79.

<sup>21</sup> Tanaka, *Kinsei chihō jūin keieishi no kenkyū*, 59–62.

<sup>22</sup> Hasegawa, *Daiganji shiwa*, 89.

*monto/heisōchi* to raise their stature to full-branch status, but this, too, was very expensive, hence difficult to achieve.

The second issue that clearly challenged rural clerical networks in the Kantō was the gradual growth of severe personnel shortages. Vacancies at poor temples is not surprising, but the reduction to just one cleric (the abbot, with no disciple for the next generation) at mid-level branches in various networks suggests the impact of other demographic and social factors at work in the early modern Kantō. Despite Buddhism's relatively high social position above peasants, Shugendō and shrine clerics, and the outcaste groups, it faced a unique challenge. With the exception of Ikkō 一向 School (modern Jōdo shinshū 浄土真宗) clerics who married and fathered sons, Buddhist abbots had to recruit disciples (i.e., their successors and the next abbatial generation) from other status groups. Ideally, adult males joined from a personal desire for a religious vocation, but data from various temple archives indicates much earlier ages for their recruits. In Higurashi's study, eighteenth~mid-nineteenth century personnel records for forty-one Daihiganji branch and monto abbots show a wide range at the time of initial ordination. Fifteen was often seen as the age of transition into adulthood, and ten disciples were that age or older when they entered the Shingon clergy. Of the others, three boys were six years old or younger; fifteen were between seven and ten; and another twelve of them were in the eleven to fourteen age range. (The starting age for one other cleric in the list is not given.)<sup>23</sup> Tanaka has examined similar records for six Sōtō clerics at Kōshōji 廣正寺 (Kōnosu 鴻巣, Saitama Pref.), and their ages at entry were "0" (i.e., infancy; two boys); seven years (one boy); 8 years (two boys); and 11 years (one boy).<sup>24</sup>

Further indications of low induction ages appears in Shingi Shingon personnel data garnered from late Tokugawa lists of candidates for the abbacies of the Edo liaison temple Enpukuji 円福寺 (1857),<sup>25</sup> the headquarters Chishakuin 智積院 in Kyoto (1868),<sup>26</sup> and personal resumés (*nintai kiriyūsho* 人体起立書) in Yakuōin's archives.<sup>27</sup> Most of these clerics were between the ages of seven to fifteen when they took ordination, with ten being the average. There were of course exceptions: Yakuōin's file for a cleric named Shūsei states he came from a samurai background and entered the Shingi Shingon school at the late age of twenty-five.<sup>28</sup>

In short, Kantō temple networks had to maintain their staffing levels by ordaining and training a steady stream of boys who were bestowed upon the clergy before they reached adulthood. As Or Porath reminds us, children of elite families were sent to medieval monasteries for an education and their potential for disruptions necessitated discipline manuals.<sup>29</sup> The induction of pre-adult novices thus had long standing precedents. However, by the early modern period, Buddhist abbots in small temples

<sup>23</sup> Higurashi, "Shingi Shingonshū inaka honji Daihiganji to sono monmatsu ni kansuru kisoteki kenkyū," 93–96.

<sup>24</sup> Tanaka, *Kinsei chihō jūin keieishi no kenkyū*, 158–162.

<sup>25</sup> *TYM* 1: 207.

<sup>26</sup> *TYM* 1: 211.

<sup>27</sup> *TYM* 1: 246-247, 253; *TYM* 2: 145.

<sup>28</sup> *TYM* 1: 250.

<sup>29</sup> Porath, "Nasty Boys or Obedient Children?"

scattered across the Kantō increasingly had to compete with major population shifts due to urbanization, migration and market expansion, as well as rising levels of literacy that influenced the worldview and aspirations of commoners who might have considered placing a second or third son in the Buddhist clergy. In following section, I will summarize these factors before looking at their impact on Buddhist temple communities.

### 3. Society-Wide Pressures on Buddhist Recruiting

Although Buddhist clerics and temple networks operated as discrete entities with unique social functions, they were but one constituent within Kantō area society, hence our understanding of their personnel challenges requires at least some framing of Buddhist communities within the context of social and economic changes that occurred in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The following will not cover each aspect in depth, but it will provide general observations on how non-religious societal shifts could affect clerical recruiting and training.

Broadly speaking, the population grew in most areas of Japan during the seventeenth century, but greater regional fluctuations appeared as society under the Tokugawa shogunate entered its second century.<sup>30</sup> The greater Kantō region experienced a general decline during the eighteenth century, with the northern areas of what is now Gunma, Tochigi and Ibaragi Prefectures experiencing significant downward shifts. These losses were particularly severe following the eruption of Mt. Asama in 1783 and widespread starvation due to crop losses,<sup>31</sup> but even in normal years village populations were under pressure.<sup>32</sup> Infant mortality due to disease always restricted numbers, but according to Hayami the growth of Edo was also an important factor in rural declines. By mid-period the population of this city steadied to about 1,000,000, but poor hygiene and the increased danger of rapidly spreading diseases in the dense commoner districts created conditions for higher urban mortality and lower birth rates. The resulting vacuum in Edo's population due to the "urban graveyard" effect was offset by the influx of excess labor from the greater Kantō region.<sup>33</sup> He estimates that in the 1843–1868 period, between 21.7% and 29.5% of Edo's population was born outside the city.

Hayami's observation reminds us that demographic shifts were closely intertwined with social transformations in Kantō area villages. Households that adapted well to

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<sup>30</sup> Hayami, *The Historical Demography of Pre-Modern Japan*, 46; *Rekishi jinkō kenkyū*, 22–40.

<sup>31</sup> Hayami, *The Historical Demography of Pre-Modern Japan*, 49.

<sup>32</sup> To provide concrete figures, Hayami's data for northern Kantō populations between the 1720s and 1840s and shows a 27.9% overall drop, with the rate of fall of -13.6% in normal years and -14.2% following disasters. In southern the Kantō region (modern Saitama, Tokyo, Chiba, and parts of Kanagawa Prefectures), the rates were -5.2 overall, -0.7 in normal years and -4.5% in disaster periods (Hayami, *Rekishi jinkō kenkyū*, 30, 152). These changes as measured by percentages are depicted in map form in *Rekishi jinkō kenkyū* (28–29), and *The Historical Demography of Pre-Modern Japan* (48).

<sup>33</sup> Hayami, *The Historical Demography of Pre-Modern Japan*, 52–56; *Rekishi jinkō kenkyū*, 32–33. Hayami discusses in depth similar trends in the Kansai region around Osaka and Kyoto. Conversely, he also notes that population shifts in regions without large urban centers and castle towns require further research (Hayami, *Rekishi jinkō kenkyū*, 35).

commercialization, whether they were descended from late-medieval patriarchal families (*dogō* 土豪) or newer families with the entrepreneurial skills required for developing new technologies and goods, emerged as wealthy peasant elites (*gōnō*). At the lowest levels of rural society, less adroit or economically challenged peasants lost what little land they possessed, and thus they had to rent paddies and fields from more affluent families in order to continue farming.<sup>34</sup> Commercialization brought opportunities as well, and even mid-level families that retained their own agricultural lands increasingly engaged in by-employments or off-season work migrations (*dekasegi* 出稼ぎ) to earn additional income.<sup>35</sup> For example, a talented child could become a “jobber,” who was a peasant agent acting between village-level cotton producers in the northern Kantō and urban buyers.<sup>36</sup> The emergence of these market-oriented industries contributed to the rise of not just Edo but also to regional centers of production such as Kiryū 桐生 (a site of silk production in modern Gunma). Conversely, if heavy debts or natural disasters overwhelmed a family’s resources, sons might join the exodus to Edo in search of employment.<sup>37</sup> In the grimmest moments, infanticide was an option for reducing additional burdens—a choice which also had a long-term impact on later population growth.<sup>38</sup>

According to Tanaka’s survey of temple finances, the overall decline in farming populations could be highly detrimental to temples with small *danka* bases, because they could not rent out their lands to gain enough extra income for the support of a full-time abbot. Like the poorer strata of peasants whose debts ultimately forced them to sell off their holdings, temples at the lowest levels lost what land they had and thus became even more destitute.<sup>39</sup>

Another option that drew second or third sons of farming families away from village homes for long-term gainful employment was the evolution of the service system.<sup>40</sup> Originally, the term *hōkō* 奉公 referred to military services rendered to a samurai overlord, but it eventually indicated the hiring of servants by wealthy samurai households, commoner families (in towns and in villages), and even temples and shrines. Whereas servitude in the earlier decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century could be life-long and carried the legacy of slavery, it shifted to contract service practices by the mid-1700s.<sup>41</sup> The *bakufu* initially tried to regulate the contact periods by placing a ten-year limit, but enforcement proved to be difficult, hence the hiring master and the servant negotiated the length. Poorer peasant families could opt to place their children in service to off-set debts in the home village, and masters might abuse their advantageous position to force

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<sup>34</sup> See Pratt’s “Introduction” in his *Japan’s Protoindustrial Elite* for an overview of the *gōnō* elites and their influence over village life. Saitō notes the impact of peasant “differentiation” due to economic transformations (Saitō, “The Rural Economy,” 403).

<sup>35</sup> Saitō, “The Rural Economy.”

<sup>36</sup> Pratt, *Japan’s Protoindustrial Elite*, 108.

<sup>37</sup> Pratt, *Japan’s Protoindustrial Elite*, 111.

<sup>38</sup> Kodama, *Kinsei nōmin seikatsushi*, 273–275.

<sup>39</sup> Tanaka, *Kinsei chihō jūin keieishi no kenkyū*, 78.

<sup>40</sup> Kodama, *Kinsei nōmin seikatsu shi*, 271–273.

<sup>41</sup> Leupp, *Servants, Shop Hands and Laborers in the Cities of Tokugawa Japan*, 16–27.

involuntary extensions of service, but in general the concept of life-long servitude (*fudai* 譜代) faded. On a more advantageous note, service in a samurai or affluent commoner household exposed village-born peasant children to business and cultural practices that could be useful if they returned to their families. Contract service was not limited to Edo, and economically rising families in the smaller towns and farming villages also hired them. One example from Leupp's study was the growing textile center of Kiryū noted above, in which servants were 22% of the population in 1757 and 19% in 1819.<sup>42</sup>

Taking stock of these points, the expansion of Buddhist temple networks in the Kantō during the seventeenth-century was contemporaneous with an expanding population, but from the mid-eighteenth-century onwards, the pool for potential clerics declined as region-wide economic shifts negatively affected some families, while new means for increasing income afforded other families with opportunities to advantageously use the labor of sons who would not succeed the father. In comparison, a child placed into the Buddhist clergy took on clerical orders and thus underwent a fundamental change in their status identity. This shift was signified by the removal of their name from village registers, and the addition of their new clerical name to temple personnel lists. As we shall see below, a cleric could still maintain personal connections with his natal family, but his social transformation placed him beyond the reach of parents who later might want to place their son in more profitable activities or bring him back home. In short, the pressures on Buddhist ordination recruitment grew as the overall rural population declined and options for gainfully employing extra sons emerged during the second half of the early modern period.

In addition to these demographic implications, the politico-economic transformation of Kantō village practices generated new opportunities for creating cultural empowerment. The rise of such aspirations among elite villager families did benefit temples, because these peasants-as-patrons were willing to sponsor elaborate rituals and rebuilding projects as expressions of faith and as acts of cultural-social capital creation.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, whenever an abbacy became vacant, these families often worked with head temple administrators to maintain the grounds and facilities until a new abbot could be found, and there are cases in which they played an important role in the actual search for a successor.<sup>44</sup> Quite frankly, village-level data shows that such lay families were vital to the continuity of Buddhism's presence in rural society.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time, the rising cultural aspirations of this same stratum of elite peasant families posed additional challenges to Buddhism's place in village communities. Aside from their roles as ritualists, spiritual guides and certifiers of orthodoxy, it is well known

<sup>42</sup> Leupp, *Servants, Shop Hands and Laborers in the Cities of Tokugawa Japan*, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Hōzawa, *Bakuhān kenryoku to jidan seido*, 205–258; Vesey, “Peasants as Clients and Patrons of Buddhism in Early Modern Village Life.”

<sup>44</sup> Hōzawa, *Bakuhān kenryoku to jidan seido*, 230–238; Tanaka, *Kinsei chihō jūin keieishi no kenkyū*, 79–86; Vesey, “Clerical-Lay Relations in Edo Period Local Temples.”

<sup>45</sup> Hōzawa shows this in his study of the Saitō family, who exerted influence over temples in their home village of Hirayama (Hōzawa, *Bakuhān kenryoku to jidan seido*). Aoki also reveals their role as employers of peasants in service (Aoki, “Kinsei no Kantō hatasaku nōson ni okeru koyō to rōdō no henshitsu katei”).

that rural Buddhist clerics provided basic education to peasant children at temple schools (*terakoya* 寺子屋). This function continued throughout the early modern period, but in the eighteenth-century increasing numbers of teachers came from the laity.<sup>46</sup> To a certain extent, Buddhist educational activities contributed to this trend because they fostered basic literacy among commoners. More importantly, shifting land ownership trends and increasing access to the economic benefits of marketization stimulated interest in the value of education among elite peasant families, because the ability to read and write was vital to the creation and control of documents that were mandatory for village administration. Therefore, families with elite aspirations came to see a child's efforts in school as more valuable than working in the fields.<sup>47</sup> Such literacy also facilitated the elite's participation in regional networking activities with their economic and social peers,<sup>48</sup> and it allowed them to access cultural trends and the growing body of published materials that flowed out of cities like Edo and Kyoto. When displayed during the course of village activities, these intellectual attainments further enhanced the stature of elite families.<sup>49</sup> Finally, on the point of increasing options for the deployment of youthful labor, the growth of schools meant that teaching became a viable vocation for intellectually oriented sons who might have otherwise considered a clerical career to obtain knowledge. (According to Tone's study of *terakoya* in the upper Musashi [modern Saitama] region, 57% of the teachers were first born, while another 25% were second-born sons).<sup>50</sup>

Decades of scholarship on early modern history has detailed the intellectual and ideological transformations among peasant elites that also contributed to the decentering of the Buddhist clergy in village life. These developments, too, surely affected the consideration of a clerical career for children among the rising stratum of villagers who had cultural and local socio-political aspirations. Increasing literacy not only provided access to technical knowledge, but it also facilitated well-read peasants' ability to draw upon Buddhist concepts while developing lay oriented practices and movements. Examples of such intellectual agency are the Sekimon Shingaku 石門心学 movement in which non-clerical thinkers formed a belief system through a synthesis of Confucian and Zen ideas,<sup>51</sup> and the various discourses on personal cultivation that emerged during the

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<sup>46</sup> For the upper Musashi region, see *SKS* 1: 195–202. Platt's study of commoner teachers in the Shinano region notes a similar trend. In Shinano, teachers of peasant origins were always numerous, but up to the mid-1700s, 35% were Buddhist (with a few Shinto) clerics and another 25% were of samurai origins. By end of Tokugawa period, clerical and samurai teachers were still present, but commoners had assumed the most active role in expanding rural education (Platt, *Burning and Building*, 28).

<sup>47</sup> Platt, *Burning and Building*, 51–51.

<sup>48</sup> This integrative aspect of literacy was already an important element in the maintenance of transregional Buddhist organizations and sectarian identities.

<sup>49</sup> Platt, *Burning and Building*, 39–43. In this sense, the ability to control knowledge was comparable to the socio-cultural benefits accrued from acts of temple patronage by commoner elites that drew upon older aristocratic and samurai precedents (Vesey, "Peasants as Clients and Patrons of Buddhism in Early Modern Village Life; "Fashioning the Abbot").

<sup>50</sup> Tone, *Tera koya to shomin kyōiku no jisshōteki kenkyū*, 273.

<sup>51</sup> Sawada, *Confucian Values and Popular Zen*.

early modern period.<sup>52</sup> Buddhist clerics increasingly faced even greater challenges from a range of Confucian ideologues and Nativist advocates, including those who supported Hirata Atsutane's efforts to propagate his vision for stabilizing village communal life.<sup>53</sup> The potential impact of this latter movement is well reflected in Anne Walthall's study of Matsuo Taseko 松尾多勢子 (1811–1894).<sup>54</sup> An ardent believer of Buddhist teachings in her early life,<sup>55</sup> her encounters with the Nativist teacher Iwasaki Nagayo 岩崎長世 (1807–1879) altered her world view.<sup>56</sup> As in her case, Hirata's ideas were espoused by the *gōnō* stratum of prominent villagers. Therefore, even though these families became rural Buddhism's wealthiest patrons, the diffusion of Nativist beliefs in the latter decades of the early modern period would have dissuaded the adherents of the new ideology from considering a clerical career for their sons.

#### 4. Challenges Facing Regional Clerical Leaders

Even though Kantō area rural population began to rebound from the 1830s,<sup>57</sup> the continuing records of temple vacancies indicate there was no reduction of the Buddhist clergy's personnel difficulties. Temple abbots thus had to attract possible disciples in an increasingly competitive social environment. While there were surely some boys who expressed a personal interest in a clerical calling, the authority to submit a request for ordination lay with the child's parent or guardian. There is little documentation on how commoner families made the choice to place a son in a temple, but Sakamoto Masahito's study of one young cleric's ordination offers a unique window on the process.<sup>58</sup> The account comes from the daily record of Tōfukuji 東福寺, a regional Shingi Shingon head temple in the Katsushika 葛飾 district (modern Chiba Prefecture). In 1844, a nine-year old boy named Gakuzō 学蔵 was introduced to the abbot Kan'yū 寛融 by his step-father Matabei 又兵衛, who had taken charge of the boy and his elder brother following his marriage Gakuzō's divorced mother.<sup>59</sup> Matabei, however, had other sons from own previous marriage, hence, Gakuzō and his older brother occupied an awkward position within the new household. Since Matabei's faith in Buddhism led him to study the *Lotus Sutra* with Tōkufuji's Kan'yū, he first sent his eldest stepson for ordination, and once Gakuzō was of age, the stepfather offered him, too.

In Shingi Shingon, the new arrivals received basic instruction in the sutras and learn to perform simple duties around the temple. There was a subtle name change as well, in that during this probationary period the temple abbot added "maru" 丸 to the end of the

<sup>52</sup> Sawada, *Practical Pursuits*, 10–88.

<sup>53</sup> Platt, *Burning and Building*, 57–64. Harootunian discusses the ideological value of Nativist thought to peasant elites and their efforts to justify their authority over village matters (Harootunian, *Things Seen and Unseen*, 230–233).

<sup>54</sup> Walthall, *The Weak Body of a Useless Woman*.

<sup>55</sup> Walthall, *The Weak Body of a Useless Woman*, 70.

<sup>56</sup> Walthall, *The Weak Body of a Useless Woman*, 100–120.

<sup>57</sup> Pratt, *Japan's Protoindustrial Elite*, 115.

<sup>58</sup> Sakamoto, "Kinsei no shukke."

<sup>59</sup> Adding to the complications, apparently Gakuzō and his elder brother did not have the same father.



new arrival's secular name. (In keeping with the dictates of status prerogatives, children from elite families were addressed with an official title.)<sup>60</sup> Gakuzō was thus called Gakuzōmaru at first, which was abbreviated to Gakumaru in the temple's diary.

After an abbot determined his new ward's suitability, he shaved the disciple's head and performed the ordination by giving him the novice precepts (*shamikai* 沙彌戒). He also replaced the lay name with two new clerical names: a courtesy title (*kemyō* 仮名), and a new Buddhist name (*jitsumyō* 実名). After spending nine months at Tōfukuji, Kan'yū agreed to accept the boy as a disciple, and Gakumaru thereby became the young Shingi cleric Jōzanbō 定山房 (his *kemyō*) Yūjitsu 祐実 (his personal name). Temple records indicate that Yūjitsu did receive regular visits from his mother and stepfather at Tōfukuji. He was also allowed a visit their home prior to his ordination. Other parents or guardians may have been less concerned with the children they handed off to the clergy, but Yūjitsu's parents apparently did share a continuing interest in his wellbeing. In 1849, Yūjitsu began the *shido kegyō* 四度加行 training that formed the core of Shingon rituals, which concluded with learning the *goma* 護摩 rite and his anointment (*kanjō* 灌頂). According to Sakamoto's study, Yūjitsu's completion of the training apparently influenced his relationship with his other parent, too. Prior to that point, the father Fujiemon 藤右衛門 does not appear in the temple's account, but once Yūjitsu became a fully anointed Shingi cleric, he performed the *goma* for Fujiemon, and his father attended his Dharma talk.

As in this case, the placement of a child depended on the relationship between a parent/guardian and an abbot, and the initial probation indicates Kan'yū was aware of the need to assess the Gakuzō's ability to accept the new life course set by Matabei's decision. Since ordination did change the boy's identity within the early modern status system, other parties beyond the parent-abbot nexus participated in the process. On the secular side, officials in his village signified their approval by removing him from the village register and sending a certificate authorizing the novice's transfer to a temple registry. In the last decades of the early modern period, *bakufu* intendants and domain officials also reviewed these petitions prior to approval.<sup>61</sup> In order to ensure the intake of suitable novices, higher clerical authorities established guidelines with quite explicit selection criteria. For example, in 1675 the Shingi Shingon headquarter temple Hasedera 長谷寺 in Nara issued regulations for rejecting cripples (*gotai fugu* 五躰不具) and those with dubious backgrounds (e.g. wandering mendicants like *kōya hijiri* 高野聖 or *sarugaku* 猿樂 performers).<sup>62</sup> A similar list submitted to the *bakufu* in 1802 by the Shingi liaison temples included further conditions for samurai petitioners (they should be investigated and accepted only with the recommendation from their domain lord), and sons of those

<sup>60</sup> According to the 1802 *Shingi shingonshū shukke seiritsu saisho yori ryō honzan e tenzuru shōshin made no shidai* 新義真言宗出家成立最初方両本山江轉昇進迄之次第 (a description of Shingi Shingon clerical practices that the Shingi liaisons filed with the *bakufu*), a new potential disciple was given a *maruna* 丸名 or *hyakkan kunina* 百官国名; ZGR, 380.

<sup>61</sup> NSS, 498–499. Item dated 1843.

<sup>62</sup> Saitō, “*Nihon bukkyō kyōikushi kenkyū*,” 242–243. While certainly biased, exclusions based on social origins reflected *bakufu* policies for handing or suppressing religious mendicants with no sectarian affiliations.

engaged in “mean trades” (*geshoku shōbai* 下職商売; leather sandal making and brush binding, for example) were to be rejected out of hand.<sup>63</sup> In other words, abbots were not allowed to accept petitions from applicants associated with the reviled status groups at the lowest levels of the early modern social hierarchy. (The 1802 statement also hints that families from discriminated communities tried to hide their origins by placing children in peasant, townsmen, and Shugendō households.) The Kan’ei 寛永 9 (1632) Jōdo regulations governing novices at the training halls of Zōjōji 増上寺 also had an appearance clause and restrictions against candidates affiliated with other clerical organizations. In this code, fifteen was the minimum age for ordination.<sup>64</sup>

Following their formal acceptance into a Buddhist organization, ordinands like Yūjitsu were enveloped in a religious milieu that sought to instill the tenets and practices of that school and the social mode of the Edo era Buddhist clergy. Assuming the novice adapted to this dramatic shift in lifestyle and possessed a degree of ability, he proceeded along a well-established career path that would hopefully lead to the abbacy of a rural temple and perhaps spiritual fulfillment. During this process, he was exposed to the socializing influences of temple obligations, regularized education, and clothing regulations that centripetally pulled him into the larger Buddhist order. Given the overall thrust of the status system—social ordering—these forces integrated lay-born sons drawn from villages and urban wards into a legally recognized sectarian community that served specified functions in Tokugawa society.

The process of acculturation began under the guidance of the ordination master (e.g., Kan’yū in Yūjitsu’s case). In the beginning, *shoke* spent the several years learning basic temple practices, including elemental knowledge of sutras, prayers, and some initial hand gestures (*in* 印; *mudrā*) used in rites. In Shingi Shingon, the initial training centered the *shido kegyō*, a four-part curriculum that provided fundamental knowledge in esoteric Buddhism. According to the 1802 description submitted to the *bakufu*, a *shoke* was expected to complete 250 days of training in the “eighteen paths” (*jūhachidō* 十八道), the Diamond Realm (*kongōkai* 金剛界) and Womb Realm (*taizōkai* 胎藏界) *mandalas*, and the *goma* fire ceremony. They could complete the sequence in succession, or split the course over several years, and they might fulfill parts of it in other nearby temples.<sup>65</sup> Newly ordained Jōdo *shoke* were expected study the three major sutras of the Jōdo tradition.<sup>66</sup>

In addition, they might attend the abbot when he left the temple grounds on business or helped him to perform annual rites such as the offering of prayers and food to hungry spirits (*segaki* 施餓鬼) that was conducted in the eighth month. Since parishioner relations were a major element in temple operations, *shoke* also learnt the proper manners for greeting guests, and they might assist with memorial rites held in parishioner homes. In

<sup>63</sup> ZGR, 380–386.

<sup>64</sup> Hasegawa, “Zōjōji shozō ‘Nyūjichō’ no kenkyū (2),” 320. A footnote particularly notes there was no use for anyone who could not read the sutras.

<sup>65</sup> Sakamoto, “Kinsei no shukke,” 411–412, 418. The *kegyō* training was also mandated by the *bakufu* in 1615; NSS, 336.

<sup>66</sup> Jōdo training methods are described in JZ, 157–159.

keeping with its catholic approach to Buddhism, Tendai training combined formats. According to the *Tendaishū sōto keireki senkyo etai no shidai* 天台宗僧徒經歷選舉衣体之次第 submitted to the *bakufu* in 1802, Tendai *shoke* in the esoteric training track followed the *shido kegyō*, while those in exoteric training undertook an extended course of course of textual and doctrinal study.<sup>67</sup>

After several years of such guidance, *shoke* education shifted to regional training halls, many of which were in head temples. Early modern clerical educational systems emerged from medieval cenobitic practices, with additional support coming from Tokugawa *bakufu* policies that acknowledged Buddhist sectarian traditions as the basis for establishing authority over smaller regional networks and individual temples.<sup>68</sup> As these systems evolved, they came to be known by the number of their constituent institutions, or by the ranks of their abbots. The Jōdo School in the Kantō thus had eighteen *danrin* (*jūhachi danrin* 十八談林) with the main ones being in Edo, while the Kantō Tendai organization consisted of a three tiered “three *sōjōji* 僧正寺, eight *danrin*, and seven *bantōji* 伴頭寺” system.<sup>69</sup> Within Shingi Shingon, there were eleven main *danrin* affiliated with the Kansai headquarters of Chishakuin and Hasedera, and they sat atop a training system with scores of smaller schools scattered across the Kantō.

Since temple codes for any school stipulated *danrin* training as a key criterion for an abbatial appointment, these halls were vital for the preparation of clerics who could fill temple vacancies, but in an ironic twist, there is evidence indicating the transregional nature of these systems facilitated the drain of personnel from the countryside into Edo (a trend that mirrored the larger demographic changes noted above). In the case of Tendai, Kan'eiji's elite position in the Kantō heightened the stature of its training facilities (Kan'eiji *gakuryō* 寛永寺学寮) and thus a young cleric might spend his first years in a rural hall and then move to Kan'eiji to complete his studies.<sup>70</sup> In 1711, Tendai authorities tried to reverse the flow with a requirement of ten years of rural hall training before an application to Kan'eiji (*SKS* 2: 284), but this was later reduced to just seven or eight.<sup>71</sup> The eventual decline among rural Tendai *danrin* is evident in records from Daikōfushōji 大光普照寺 in the northern Musashi region: Kan'eiji granted it with *danrin* stature in 1684, and it initially had over eighty *shoke* in residence. By 1751–1764 the population was only forty, and in the early 1800s it was down to ten *shoke*.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Citation in *ZGR*, 356–357. This section of the text directly pertains to practices on Mt. Hiei 比叡, but it notes the Kantō Tendai temples followed the same traditions. This is reiterated in the Kan'eiji 寛永寺 section on pages 360–361. The duration was set for twelve years on Mt. Hiei, but only eight were required at the Nikkō, Kan'eiji and other Kantō rural training halls.

<sup>68</sup> For further reference, the Tokugawa *bakufu*'s emphasis on clerical training standards is evident in the myriad of codes promulgated between 1600 and 1615. See *NSS*, 321–342.

<sup>69</sup> The list of Tendai training centers is in Saitō's *Nihon bukkyō kyōikushi kenkyū* (204–205) and Volume 2 of *SKS* (275, 280). The designations of *sōjōji* and *bantō* indicated temples whose abbots were of the *sōjō* and *bantō* clerical ranks respectively.

<sup>70</sup> Kan'eiji's authority stemmed from its position as a Tokugawa house prayer/funeral temple and as the main Tendai liaison to the *bakufu*. In the first part of the period, it also oversaw the whole Kantō-area Tendai training system.

<sup>71</sup> *ZGR*, 362–364.

<sup>72</sup> *SKS* 2: 282.

The Jōdo school experienced a similar movement among its clerics. Hasegawa Kyōshūn's research of the eighteen Jōdo School training halls reveals that increasing *shoke* residency at the most prestigious Edo temples (Zōjōji, Denzūin 伝通院, Reiganji 靈巖寺, and Reizanji 靈山寺) came at the expense of regional training centers. At Zōjōji, for example, the average annual intake was 142 *shoke*, while the average matriculation rates at regional halls ranged from only four to seventeen new trainees per annum. Jōdo authorities, too, tried to counterbalance this gradual movement towards Edo with admission restrictions and a lottery admission system (*chūsen* 抽籤), but ambitious *shoke* circumvented these methods by becoming the disciples of abbots of the four temples or the sub-temples within their precincts.<sup>73</sup> Upon completion of their training, urban-raised clerics did return to rural temples, but exposure to the lifestyle at major monasteries could encourage the better qualified ones to seek positions at temples in or near Edo. Furthermore, since shared training experiences at a regional hall (which were also the regional head temples in the Jōdo school) strengthened communal bonds among clerics in locally networked branch/*heisōchi* temples, this demographic shift broke the links between generations of clerics, and those who trained for years in Edo lost their sense of obligation to their former head temple and local brethren.<sup>74</sup> There was a negative institutional impact as well, because the decline in *shoke* numbers led to the reduction of residential facilities at regional Jōdo training halls by the early 1800s.

The general demographic shift appeared in Shingi Shingon, too, but the center of gravity was in the Kansai rather than Edo. The school's codes mandated a minimum total of twenty years of training experience for all Shingi clerics seeking an abbacy, at least three of which were to be spent at the Chishakuin or Hasedera.<sup>75</sup> Thus, there was a constant flow of Kantō area Shingi *shoke* to Kyoto or Nara, and according to the observations of a cleric named Eigaku 英岳, by 1711 the numbers had declined in the Kantō *danrin*.<sup>76</sup> Shingi authorities tried to counterbalance this shift by appointing some *danrin* as *itenji* 移転寺 ("transfer temples") that were suitable abbatial seats for elite clerics in the headquarter training halls, yet this policy did not really mitigate the declining educational significance of regional Shingi *danrin* relative to the headquarter facilities.<sup>77</sup>

Tsuji's analysis included the critical observation that "formalization" (*keishikika* 形式化) contributed to the overall decline of early modern Buddhism. Compared to early modern clerics who have been praised for their doctrinal or spiritual innovations (e.g., Hakuin or Jiun), Tsuji's comment is not without merit. That being said, the *bakufu* expected clerical leaders to bring order and accountability to their schools. Given the fact that they had to train *shoke* who may not have been personally motivated to follow a path

<sup>73</sup> For this data, see Hasegawa, "Zōjōji shozō 'Nyūjichō' no kenkyū (1)"; "Zōjōji shozō no 'Nyūjichō' no kenkyū (2)"; "Zōjōji shozō no 'Nyūjichō' no kenkyū (3)." Hasegawa discusses the circumventions on page 319 and the lottery on page 321 (Hasegawa, "Zōjōji shozō no 'Nyūjichō' no kenkyū (2)").

<sup>74</sup> Hasegawa, *Daiganji shiwa*, 92–93.

<sup>75</sup> *NSS*, 336.

<sup>76</sup> Quoted in Saitō, *Nihon bukkyō kyōikushi kenkyū*, 225.

<sup>77</sup> Hōzawa, *Kinsei bukkyō no seido to jōhō*, 67–68. For a detailed analysis, see Kushida, *Zoku Shingon mikkyō seiritsu katei no kenkyū*, 704–754.

of ascetic/spiritual training, the educational systems did provide at least a modicum of general standards. Although Sakamoto's account of Yūjitsu does not follow him into middle age, career path consistency is evident in the biographies of three Shingi clerics in the Yakuōin archives. (The biographies at Daihiganji cited above reflect similar career trajectories.)

*Biographies at Yakuōin*<sup>78</sup>

	<b>Kanzui 環瑞(1797)</b>	<b>Zonkaku 存覚(1807)</b>	<b>Ken'a 賢阿(1844)</b>
<b>Event</b>	<b>(Place; age)</b>	<b>(Place; age)</b>	<b>(Place; age)</b>
<b>Ordination</b>	Kichijōin; 13	Daishōji; 11	Shōrenji; 12
<b>Kegyō</b>	Enpukuji; 16	Daishōji ; 13	Chōfukuji; 17
<b>Shinka</b>	Kichijōin; 16	Daichiji; 12	Shōganji; 18
<b>Kanjō</b>	Hōshōji; 25	Kōtokuji; 24	Hōjūin; 23
<b>HQ period</b>	[Hasedera]; 24–30	[Hasedera]; 20–29	[Hasedera]; 10 yrs.
<b>Hōdan</b>		Daichiji; 32	Shōrenji; 33

Following their initial ordinations, they underwent the *shido kegyō* training and participated in Hōonkō 報恩講 that honored the founder of Shingi Shingon, Kakuban 覺鑾 (Kōgyō Daishi 興教大師 [1095–1143]).<sup>79</sup> The textual studies centered on question/response dialogues compiled by the medieval-era Shingi cleric Shōken 聖憲 (1307–1392).<sup>80</sup> For each session, the participants engaged in practice debates or formal exchanges in which a younger *shoke* would raise a question or topic, and then senior clerics offered responses based on the texts being studied. After several years of participation, *shoke* would assume the role of responder. Their first time was known as *shinka* 新加, and judging from the personnel histories, it was a significant milestone in a cleric's progress through the training program. Aside from Shingi texts, their education included studies in Tendai, Hossō 法相, Sanron 三論, Kegon 華嚴, and Hīnayāna 小乘 texts as well as further training in the *goma*.<sup>81</sup> The move to Hasedera (also known as Koikebō 小池坊) took place in their early twenties, after they had passed the *shinka* stage at a rural *danrin* Hōonkō and received anointment. Seventeenth-century Shingi authorities expected *shoke* to have fourteen to fifteen years of rural *danrin* experience before matriculating at a headquarter school, but by the 1760s this requirement was often

<sup>78</sup> Documents are *TYM* 1: 246–247, and 253.

<sup>79</sup> The importance of the Hōonkō in *danrin* training is stressed in a Hōei 宝永 1 (1704) announcement promulgated by Shingi authorities (*TYM* 1: 176) and in the explanation of Shingi Shingon given to the *bakufu* one hundred years later in 1801/12 (*ZGR* 382–383).

<sup>80</sup> For a description of the evolution of these texts and a biography of Shōken, see Katsumata, *Shingon no kyōgaku*, especially 1: 32–38.

<sup>81</sup> *ZGR*, 382–383.

reduced to less than ten.<sup>82</sup> (The Yakuōin biographies reflect this trend towards reductions in training time.) Eventually they returned to the Kantō, and gave their First Dharma Talk (*hatsu hōdan* 初法談) at a *danrin* or large temple. At this point they were ready to assume a branch temple abbacy.

During the latter stages of training, if a cleric showed a degree of responsibility and managerial ability, he might be appointed to the caretakership of a vacant branch temple by local leaders of his school.<sup>83</sup> Since his certification was still incomplete, such an appointment did not confer upon him the right to perform funeral rituals or take on disciples, but it did provide practical experience in temple management and clergy-*danka* relations. While only a temporary response, this employment of older training clerics was a viable means for handling a regional network's personnel issues. If a cleric did not finish his training, his future was permanently limited to this caretaker status, or a possible appointment to a *monto/heisōchi* temple that did not require the completion of the full education/certification process.

#### 4.1 When the robe did not fit: Problems that emerged during training

While clerics such as Yūjitsu appear to have complacently adapted to the vocation chosen for them, many children carry the latent potential for more obstreperous engagement with the social forms and practices that envelope them. In the context of early modern Japan, W. Puck Brecher's 2015 study argues that in contradiction to the descriptions of well-behaved children penned by nineteenth-century western visitors, child disobedience and violence was common. Popular role models of masculine valor contributed to rebellious children, as did social and economic instabilities from the late 1700s onwards.<sup>84</sup> Responding to these conditions, they used ritually substantiated modes of disruption and mock battles as a means for self-expression and resistance to socially imposed norms.<sup>85</sup>

In stark contrast to the openness this lifestyle, Buddhist clerics were expected to raise *shoke* who could: follow precepts that limited their activities; read the complex texts of their traditions; and perform the rites that were a focal point of clerical life. Therefore, an ordination master had to effectively resituate a disciple (who may have come joined the clergy with a degree of individuality and resistance) into a new context in which there was a strict moral code and little latitude for personal expressions of ambiguous behavior. The training methods of the various schools, while formulaic, did facilitate the acceptance of such a dramatic identity change through years of enculturation, and rural abbots were perhaps guided by instructions for handling disobedient acolytes that they received from medieval temple practices.<sup>86</sup> However, there should be no surprise that

<sup>82</sup> SKS 2: 306.

<sup>83</sup> Sōtō Zen records refer to the position as *kansu* 監寺 or *kanbō* 看坊 (Tanaka, *Kinsei chihō jiin keieishi no kenkyū*, 165–167).

<sup>84</sup> Brecher, "Being a Brat," 94–95.

<sup>85</sup> Ujiie provides numerous examples of children's aggressive behavior in early modern life (Ujiie, *Edo no shōnen*, 99–127).

<sup>86</sup> Porath, "Nasty Boys or Obedient Children?," 27–30.

among these boys who were forced into this life prior to their physical, social and mental maturation, some would resist such measures. We must also acknowledge the potential for additional psychological pressure from confusion, sadness and anger among children and adolescents who were unwilling leave their families, or who had sufficient self-awareness to realize the looming disjuncture between their personal desires and the path selected for them.

A skillful abbot could combine a firm hand (training as coercion) and empathy (the power of suasion) to overcome resistance, but tensions grew if the child did not adapt. The strongest willed and most resourceful might try to run away, but younger children were less able to do so. The abbot might also decide a case was hopeless and order the resisting child to leave, but there was no guarantee that the biological family would accept their return. While an extreme example, the following case reflects the potential for destructive stress between a recalcitrant novice and the training abbot. In Bunka 4 (1807), the *bakufu*'s deliberative council (*hyōjōsho* 評定所) had to judge the case of a Sōtō school *shoke* named Genzui 元隨 who was convicted of arson. According to the incident description, Genzui was disciple of Hōrinji 芳林寺, a Sōtō temple in Iwatsuki 岩槻, and the abbot had strongly excoriated Genzui for stealing money from the abbot to buy sweets. The abbot also rebuked the disciple for his overall disdain of clerical life. Genzui had decided to return to his uncle's residence, but upon being scolded again he set a fire that consumed the precincts. Genzui's personal statements are not stated in the account, but the report speculates anger with the abbot's treatment motivated his attack. Arson was a capital offence for which adults were executed by burning (*hiaburi* 火炙), but since Genzui was still a minor, *bakufu* officials banished him to an offshore island for life once he became fifteen. Until that time he was under his uncle's supervision. There is insufficient information to judge whether the abbot's training methods were to blame for Genzui's recourse to violence, but he was clearly unsuited to the life.<sup>87</sup>

There is also anecdotal evidence that families with mentally challenged children tried to ease their burden by asking an abbot to assume guardianship. An illustrative case concerns a twenty-six year old man named Sashichi 佐七 who suffered from periods of insanity. His sister and brother-in-law petitioned the family temple of Seiōji 清雄寺 to take him in. The abbot later took Sashichi on a trip to the Kansai, but while in Okayama, Sashichi obtained a knife and killed the abbot's nephew; he also wounded several others.

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<sup>87</sup> *OR*, 498–499. This compendium contains examples of various crimes and judgments that were selected as juridical precedents for reference. Genzui's case was listed in the section for cases of arson by children and the elderly, hence it was not included as a particularly "clerical" incident. The *OR* lists another clergy-related case in a section for thieves on the run. This occurred in 1817 when a *shoke* named Shūmin 秀民 at a Jōdo temple in Hitachi Province 常陸国 stole thirty-four *ryō* and ran off to the Shinagawa and Shinjuku post-stations to drink. He also assumed the guise of a doctor and purchased the sexual services from a maid at a Shinjuku inn. Local officials wanted to execute him, while his abbot-master petitioned for leniency (*OR*, 301–302). Drawing upon earlier precedents, the *bakufu* ordered public exposure (*sarashi* 晒) and expulsion from Edo, and then he was to be handed over to Jōdo liaison officials for intra-school punishment. Luckily for Shūmin, the *bakufu* issued a reprieve for the banishment and exposure when it celebrated the birth of a Tokugawa house child. The maid Ehi 恵比 who had unknowingly received some of this stolen money was identified, and officials confiscated the funds (*OR*, 435–436).

Upon investigation into his mental state, the *bakufu* and domain authorities ordered him into lifelong care under his sister.<sup>88</sup> Hiramatsu cites this case and adds that if a family had to deal with a potentially disruptive son with such an issue, the options were confinement or disowning him (*kandō* 勘当).<sup>89</sup> If the latter option was chosen, then placement with the clergy became possible. Hiramatsu further argues that since many were placed in Tendai, Shingon, Nichiren and Sōtō temples, the families may have hoped their prayer rituals could alleviate the affliction.

With the passage of time, the ordinand hopefully settled down to accept his transformation, but records of Kitain indicate this was not always the case. Muryōjuji was an important site of clerical education in the medieval period, and while Kitain assumed overall control of the precincts in the early modern period, Nakain continued this heritage as one of eight Kantō-area Tendai training halls<sup>90</sup> The hall supervisor (*ryōsu* 寮主) had the name of Jōjubō 成就坊, and senior *shoke* were appointed to the position of “head seat” (*shuso* or *shuza* 首座). The entries for 1818 indicate there were over twenty trainees at various levels in their careers in residence.<sup>91</sup> In addition to their studies, they played supporting roles in Kitain’s annual rituals and other activities, and if they stayed long enough to acquire certification, then they might be appointed to a branch abbacy in a nearby Tendai temple.<sup>92</sup>

The hall in 1818 was free of major issues, but Kitain’s 1819 diaries describe a difficult event for the *shoke* in residence.<sup>93</sup> On the tenth day of the intercalary fourth month, the temple community discovered an attack on three dogs that were kept within the precincts.<sup>94</sup> Based upon the evidence, the administrators believed the perpetrators had used a sickle. One died from its deep wounds, and volume of spilt blood near the main hall was so great that the abbot ordered the stripping and replacement of topsoil to purify the spot. Kitain’s head administrator (*chiji* 知事) condemned the act as a transgression against the precepts and ordered the supervisor Jōjubō and the head seat Ichiinbō 一印房 to conduct a thorough inquest. A member of Kitain’s lay staff saw an unidentified culprit running into one of the training hall’s buildings, and that night a *shoke* named Tokuonbō 得恩房 was identified as the sole culprit.<sup>95</sup> Fortunately for him, the harsh animal protection laws of the fifth shogun Tsunayoshi were a distant memory, but Kitain immediately expelled him from the training hall and its general precincts for his heinous act. The temple also strongly reprimanded Ichiinbō for his failure to rigorously investigate the matter. There was subsequent discussion of punishing the head seat and Jōjubō with a period of confinement to quarters, but ultimately Kitain’s administrators withheld this penalty on the expectation of better leadership from them in the future. One

<sup>88</sup> Fuse, *Hyakkajō shirabegaki*, 4125–4129.

<sup>89</sup> Hiramatsu, “Nihon bukkyō ni okeru sō to chigo no nanshoku,” 99–100.

<sup>90</sup> *SMF* 8: 249–250.

<sup>91</sup> *KN* 3: 109, 144.

<sup>92</sup> *KN* 4: 88, 101, 301.

<sup>93</sup> Records for the following case are in *KN* 4: 89–91, 195, 227, 230, and 243.

<sup>94</sup> *KN* 4: 89–94.

<sup>95</sup> Tokuonbō was listed as trainee on the twentieth day of the first month of Bunsei 2 (*KN* 4: 23). Therefore, he apparently was in residence for only a short period.



month after his expulsion, on the twentieth day of the fifth month Tokuonbō approached the abbot of Minamiin 南院 (another cloister in the precincts) to express his regret for his actions and to plead for an intercession on his behalf in the hope of returning.<sup>96</sup> The administrator informed Minamiin on the twenty-fifth that Tokuonbō should wait at least 100 days before making such a petition. The diary makes no mention of such a request from him during the rest of that year or the next.

Aside from this recorded expression of regret, Kitain's dog butcher did not leave any personal testimony; hence we can only speculate about his motives. Like Sashichi, innate psychological instability may have incited his aggression. From a comparative perspective, the motivations for his violence against domestic animals may have been like those ascribed to young Parisian workers who killed the cats of their masters as a calculated means for resisting the social inequalities that informed the harsh conditions of their employment in the years before the French Revolution.<sup>97</sup> The Kitain account does not suggest that Tokuonbō viewed the dogs as a symbolic representation of the clergy or the temple, and while Tokuonbō may have been abused while in residence, the temple's diary makes no mention of such a condition.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, his actions may not closely match Darton's account of the youthful French cat-killers, but Tokuonbō perhaps used the hapless animal as medium for expressing similar frustrations.

The remainder of 1819 was relatively quiet, but other disciplinary issues arose in 1820. At the start of the fourth month, Ichiinbō was implicated in an incident with another head seat *shoke* named Kōkanbō 興觀房, and both were ordered into confinement (*enryo* 遠慮) for fifty days.<sup>99</sup> The confinement was cut short, when Ichiinbō apologized on the seventeenth and was granted a reprieve.<sup>100</sup> One month later, Kitain held a display of religious objects (*kaichō* 開帳) at the Jieidō 慈恵堂 (its main hall), with the various cloisters and votive chapels also holding events. Myōkanbō 妙觀房 was serving in the temple administrative offices, and on the twelfth day he left the precincts without permission and began to drink *sake*.<sup>101</sup> Given his position and the religious gravity of the moment, the administrators ordered strict confinement (*oshikomi* 押込). Only three days later, a different cleric named Shōinbō 正因坊 had created friction with other members of the temple and was ordered into light confinement (*sashihikae* 差控).<sup>102</sup> The punishment, however, apparently did not work: on the twenty-third of the fifth month, the

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<sup>96</sup> KN 4: 123.

<sup>97</sup> Darton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes of French Cultural History*, 75–104.

<sup>98</sup> This lacuna does not preclude the possibility of such abuse, but if that were the case, then the temple's diarist exercised his authority over the narrative to omit this information.

<sup>99</sup> KN 4: 194. There were various forms of confinement used in early modern penal practices. *Enryo* meant the recipient was confined to quarters during the daylight hours, but they could quietly leave at night. *Oshikomi* was a stricter form that prohibited leaving the site of confinement. Conversely, *sashihikae* was a lighter sentence in which the recipient was forbidden from publicly leaving their residence via a front gate, but they could discretely leave by side doors.

<sup>100</sup> KN 4: 203. Kōkanbō had been let out earlier to visit a prominent cleric at Kan'eiji who was gravely ill (KN 4: 200).

<sup>101</sup> KN 4: 227.

<sup>102</sup> KN 4: 230.

administrators felt that he was unsuitable for Kitain and ordered his departure.<sup>103</sup> In the fourth month yet another cleric—Kikanbō 起觀坊—was given the same penalty for misbehavior.<sup>104</sup> Eventually he and the previously mentioned Myōkanbō were let out of confinement in the seventh month.<sup>105</sup>

Peering through the window of the *Administrator's Record* on this brief segment of Kitain's early modern history, it is evident that even with a long period of structured training, it was not always possible to judge whether the Buddhist clerical life would transform a problematic child into a viable member of the community or create a miscreant who would never conform to the expectations placed on them. Judging from the expulsions and confinements used in response to these cases, Buddhist authorities struggled to strike a balance between the need to train clerics, and the quality of those whom they accepted into their schools. At the same time, the treatment of Tokuonbō suggests the limitations of such punishments. Practically speaking, expulsion from the monastery and the prominent Kitain was paramount to ostracization within Tendai and end the aberrant *shoke's* career: without the credentials, a temple abbacy would not open for Tokuonbō. However, the *Diary* records do not indicate formal disrobement (*datsue* 奪衣) and expulsion from the Tendai school, and the later comment regarding a possible a reprieve suggests some reticence among the leadership to take this most extreme response—an act that would strip Tokuonbō of his clerical identity and thus cast him adrift in the status system. Since he did express regret and such responses were an important element in early modern mechanisms for resolving non-criminal cases and social strife, Kitain officials may have hoped for a change of heart that would allow for his reinstatement at the training hall.<sup>106</sup>

#### 4.2 Abbatial Burdens

If a cleric met the full training requirements established for this school, he usually returned to his home area and temples to prepare for entering local society as an abbot. This would involve his participation in rituals such as the First Dharma Talk that was expected of Shingi Shingon clerics.<sup>107</sup> Once he was accepted into a regional network and appointed as the abbot of a branch or *monto* temple, he began to develop relationships with other abbots of the same school. Depending on the size of the local network, his temple might be part of a sub-group (*kumiai* 組合) under the supervision of the regional head, and he could be called upon to support other temples in his group. After several years, an abbot might move to a bigger or more prominent temple within the same school, and if he met the higher training requirements for a *danrin* abbacy, he would exert

<sup>103</sup> KN 4: 250.

<sup>104</sup> KN 4: 243.

<sup>105</sup> KN 4: 312.

<sup>106</sup> If Tokuonbō had killed a human, he would have come under Kawagoe 川越 domain jurisdiction. The sentence for murder was beheading or possibly post-execution gibbeting (*gokumon* 獄門); hence the dog was an easy and relatively “safe” target. See fn. 87 above for another example of clerical leniency.

<sup>107</sup> This requirement is in the 1615 *Shingonshū shohatto* 真言宗諸法度 of 1615 (NSS, 336, art. 6) and in the 1801 Shingi explanation to the *bakufu* (ZGR, 381).

considerable influence over the next generation.<sup>108</sup> If a cleric with sufficient credentials was appointed to the abbacy of *monto/heisōji*, it was possible to petition the regional head for full branch stature. Success not only required approval from the head temple, its other branches and higher clerical authorities, but also gifts of money. Therefore, a sufficient lay support base (*danka* families, temple lands, village shrine lands, etc.) was necessary. If the petition was accepted, the newly minted branch abbot could take on a greater range of roles.

In addition to the funerals, memorial rituals, and prayer rites expected of him by his fellow clerics and the laity, a rural abbot often shouldered the burdens arising from vacant abbaies within his schools. He participated in searches if there were no viable candidates within his network, and an abbot with social connections to clerics in other areas might be called upon to draw upon these resources in the search. If no candidate appeared, then a head temple could appoint a viable abbot to take on an “added appointment” (*kentai* 兼帯), which meant he would temporarily carry out abbatial functions for an empty temple as well his own.

Most importantly, a branch abbot was allowed to train new disciples, and thereby prepare the next generation of clerics. If he was fortunate enough to attract a viable candidate like Yūjitsubō, the abbot had a relatively easy experience with the initial stages of his ordinand’s training. If the disciple returned to his network following the *danrin* sojourn, then the abbot could influence the abbatial appointment as well. Conversely, as we have seen above, if a disciple grew disaffected or began to resist the limitations imposed by clerical life, then the abbot shouldered responsibility for handling this discord. A case in point appears in the records of the Shingi temple Daihiganji that was a source for the Higurashi survey of temple populations noted earlier. In Tenmei 天明 5 (1785), the temple appointed a cleric named Hōrin Jimyō 法輪慈明 as its twenty-sixth abbot. Jimyō was born to a local peasant family, and like many others in his school, he entered the clergy at the age of twelve. His ordination was at Daikōji 大光寺, a Daihiganji branch, but he became a disciple of Daihiganji’s twenty-fifth abbot. After passing through the regional/headquarter training system, he spent eighteen years at Hasedera in Nara.<sup>109</sup>

Three years after his accession (1788) Jimyō took on his first disciple, a nine-year old boy whom he entitled Senzenbō 千全房.<sup>110</sup> This brought the clerical population to five: Jimyō; his now retired master Banshin 鑣津; two younger disciples of Banshin named Gigenbō Hōmyō 義現房法明 and Shinkōbō 真光房; and Senzenbō.<sup>111</sup> The ordination was celebrated with gifts from nine branches and *monto*. Early diary entries give little hint of trouble, and in the eleventh month of Kansei 6 (1795) Senzenbō performed his first *goma* rite, which signified the summation of the *shido kegyō* part of

<sup>108</sup> Hōzawa details many aspects of rural clerical networks (Hōzawa, *Bakuhan kenryoku to jidan seido; Kinsei bukkyō no seido to jōhō*), and Sakamoto 1974 and Hasegawa 1974 both discuss the role of sub-groups and “same Dharma” (*hōrui* 法類) relationships in the affairs of rural clerics (Sakamoto, “Edo jidai ni okeru jiin no ‘kumiai/hōrui’ seido ni tsuite”; Hasegawa, “Kantō Jōdoshū kyōdan no matsuji tōsei”).

<sup>109</sup> Jimyō’s resumé (*nintai kiryūsho* 人躰起立書) is in *DN* 1: 11.

<sup>110</sup> *DN* 1: 75–76.

<sup>111</sup> *DN* 2: 206.

Shingi training. As the first disciple of Daihiganji's abbot, the importance of the rite was signified by gifts from all of the temples in Daihiganji's network, and the attendance of Senzenbō's mother, brothers and others from their home village of Hirai 平井.<sup>112</sup> However, apparently there were underlying tensions between Jimyō and his disciple, and thirteen months later, Senzenbō ran away from Daihiganji to one of its nearby branches to petition for "time away" (*itoma* 暇) permission from his ordination master.<sup>113</sup> Eventually other clerics in the Daihiganji network effected something of a reconciliation between the master and disciple, and Jimyō allowed Senzenbō to take on caretaker duties at a branch named Sairenji 西蓮寺 in 1799.<sup>114</sup> When Senzenbō reached the age for training at Hasedera in 1801, Jimyō provided him with the required referral letter and one *ryō* in gold as a gift.<sup>115</sup> Their relationship continued for another three years, but in second month of Kyōwa 享和 4 (1804) tensions reemerged when Senzenbō ran away once more.<sup>116</sup> He did not really settle down until he moved to a different Shingi network at the age of thirty-one.<sup>117</sup>

As the abbot of the network's head temple, Jimyō faced additional problems created by the actions of several other clerics within the Daihiganji system. In Bunka 3 (1806), the disciple Shungenbō 春玄房 at the branch Daikōji 大光寺 disappeared, taking with him 200 *ryō* in gold coins from the temple's coffers. Several years before, the oldest disciple of Shinshōji 真照寺—one Ryōkan 亮環—became abbot, and in Kansei 11 (1801) he and two other young abbots petitioned Daihiganji and Shingi authorities for permission to wear a colored robe, which was the mark of full abbatial accreditation.<sup>118</sup> However, three year later (1804) Ryōkan claimed that his temple's debts had increased during his tenure, and he asked to leave his position. The village headman later reported him missing,<sup>119</sup> and a new abbot was appointed from another branch.<sup>120</sup> During the tenure of Jimyō's successor, Ryōkan reappeared in the records as Shinshōji's caretaker in Bunka 10 (1813). However, following a major dispute between several villages over a shrine festival on the temple's grounds, he moved to the position of caretaker at yet another empty branch. Six months later in 1814, he ran away again to parts unknown, taking only his own clothes (i.e., unlike Shungenbō, he did not steal temple funds).<sup>121</sup> Daihiganji reported his disappearance to the *bakufu*.

The cause of Senzenbō's break with Jimyō is not stated, but the fact that he stayed in the Shingi clergy suggests the reasons were personal. As Jimyō's first disciple, Senzenbō was an obvious future candidate for the Daihiganji abbacy, hence Jimyō's expectations

<sup>112</sup> *DN* 1: 172.

<sup>113</sup> *DN* 1: 196.

<sup>114</sup> *DN* 1: 243.

<sup>115</sup> *DN* 2: 16.

<sup>116</sup> *DN* 2: 30.

<sup>117</sup> The *DN* editors provide a short summary of Daihiganji's disciples and problematic branch abbots in 2: 206.

<sup>118</sup> *DN* 2: 9–10. Shinshōji was the largest and most prominent branch temple in the network.

<sup>119</sup> *DN* 2: 36–37, 206.

<sup>120</sup> *DN* 2: 43.

<sup>121</sup> *DN* 2: 218–223.

would have been high. On a personal level, Jimyō supported his master and retired abbot Banshin, and Senzenbō as abbot would have done the same for him upon his own retirement. Perhaps Jimyō was abusively strict, or Senzenbō did not want to shoulder such burdens. In any event, the tensions resulted in alienation, and eventually Jimyō appointed Gigenbō as his successor.<sup>122</sup>

### 4.3 Another Option on the Margins of the Clergy

If there were no readily available clerics with training credentials who could to serve as full-time abbots or caretakers, administrators such as Jimyō could appoint *dōshin* 道心 to care for smaller temples. Over the last twenty years, scholarship on Edo life has brought into focus the existence of numerous subgroups within larger status communities, some of whom occupied ambiguous positions on society's fringes. The range and degree of marginalization depended upon the nature of the occupations that fixed their formal placement within the social hierarchies. In urban areas, hairdressers and firefighters were classified as townsmen (*chōnin* 町人), yet they performed specific functions with a degree of autonomy from other commoners in their neighborhoods. Others such as the street performers and night soil sellers also earned their livelihoods within city wards, but due to the social stigma associated with their occupations they came under the jurisdiction of *hinin* 非人 or *eta* 穢多 leaders who oversaw those distinctly low status communities. On the furthest margins were those who had fallen off the population registers entirely and were thus condemned to survive without the support of any recognized group (*nohinin* 野非人). They were the real "outcastes," because they had no recognized status identity.<sup>123</sup>

*Dōshin* (also known as *hosshinsha* 発心者) were a marginal group within Buddhism.<sup>124</sup> Whereas most disciples were expected to undergo years of training following ordination, *dōshin* took the initial precepts but went no further.<sup>125</sup> The name derives from a Buddhist term for one who seeks awakening, but based upon the limited data available, often these men entered a temple community to escape economic hardship (as opposed to those who fled to the cities), or their age prevented them from keeping gainful employment.<sup>126</sup> They shaved their heads, received two-character clerical names

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<sup>122</sup> DN 2: 134–137. Gigenbō's career path resembled that of Jimyō, but it included experience as a liaison official in Edo.

<sup>123</sup> Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, 29–30.

<sup>124</sup> Articles in Yoshida, *Jisha o sasaeru hitobito* discuss other officiants and ritualists who existed on the fringes of recognized sacerdotal groups (Yoshida, *Jisha o sasaeru hitobito*).

<sup>125</sup> Hasegawa, "Kinsei Jōdoshū no dōshinsha nit suite"; "Kantō Jōdoshū kyōdan no matsuji tōsei"; Kushida, *Shingon mikkō seiritsu katei no kenkyū*, 1066.

<sup>126</sup> Hasegawa, "Minkan shūkyōsha no ichi tenkei," 201–205. A 1789 Yakuōin temple roster listed five *dōshin* residing within its system. Their average age was sixty with the eldest being seventy-two (*TYM* 2: 81–82). Along similar lines, Hōzawa's study of a ten-temple network on the Bōsō Peninsula shows the average age for eight listed abbots was 32.3 years, while ten *dōshin* were 46.6 years old (Hōzawa, *Bakuhān kenryoku to jidan seido*, 124). Higurashi's table of Daihiganji network temple populations lists three *dōshin* caretakers of *monto* in 1816 and 1822, but there was only one in 1840 (Higurashi, "Shingi Shingonshū inaka honji Daihiganji to sono monmatsu ni kansuru kisoteki kenkyū," 98).

for their precept masters, and wore simple clerical garb. They were thus a form of cleric, but it was not uncommon for village registers to list them separately from temple abbots and their disciples. As a result, they were ritualists who occupied a vague position between fully certified clerics and the laity.<sup>127</sup> Many survived by gathering alms (*takuhatsu* 托鉢) as they wandered from village to village, but if they could find a caretaker position at a small votive hall or temple with a plot of land, they could supplement their income by growing food.<sup>128</sup> They also received support by acting as extra chanters at major temple events.

The nature and function of such marginal clerics is illustrated by the case of a *dōshin* named Nenjō 念生. Daiganji 大巖寺 in Oyumi 生実 was one of the eighteen Jōdo School *danrin*, and its abbots oversaw both the training facility and subordinate Jōdo temples and halls in the area.<sup>129</sup> One of these was a Jizō 地藏 shrine, where part of the grounds had gradually become a village grave site. With the support of nearby lay families who filed a petition on his behalf, Nenjō created a permanent position for himself as the regular shrine attendant. In order to legitimize his residency the villagers offered a monetary gift to Daiganji, and its abbot agreed to enter a pro forma teacher-disciple relationship with Nenjō—an act that conveniently slipped him under the umbrella of clerical status legitimacy.<sup>130</sup> Along somewhat similar lines, Sekiguchi's study of the Matsumura 松村 family in Shitami 志多見 village (modern Saitama Prefecture) notes they supported a succession of *dōshin* from different schools to serve as ritualists in their private chapel for ancestor veneration.<sup>131</sup>

Not all *dōshin*, however, quietly shouldered their responsibilities, and unsettled ones generated problems for administrators. Daiganji's twenty-eight abbot Ben'yo 便譽<sup>132</sup> noted in his temple's diary for 1765 that the caretaker of the Jizō at this time—Gonshin 欣心—was a drunkard and gambler who lost donated items. Writing in general terms, Ben'yo observed that *dōshin* were an uneducated lot. Gonshin's family stood as guarantors to make good the losses, but he was replaced by another *dōshin* named Saijō 西浄. This second *dōshin*'s uncle and older brother twice petitioned Ben'yo for Saijō's appointment, and he was eventually made a disciple of the branch temple Daikakuji 大覚寺. As with Gonshin, Saijō's relatives stood as guarantors to take responsibility for any problems or losses during Saijō's incumbency.<sup>133</sup> Another example was a problematic *dōshin* at Kitain's Benten 辯天 dormitory in 1819. Even though he

<sup>127</sup> Hasegawa, "Minkan shūkyōsha no ichi tenkei," 211–214.

<sup>128</sup> Sekiguchi, *Kinsei sonraku no ryōiki to mibun*, 307–314.

<sup>129</sup> Oyumi is in modern Chiba City, Chiba Prefecture. This statue was known as the Yokosuka Jizō 横須賀地藏, because it originally came from Yokosuka in Hamamatsu.

<sup>130</sup> Hasegawa, "Kinsei Jōdoshū no dōshinsha ni tsuite," 7–8.

<sup>131</sup> Sekiguchi, *Kinsei sonraku no ryōiki to mibun*, 305–325.

<sup>132</sup> Abbatial tenure: Hōreki 宝曆 11 (1761) to Meiwa 明和 6 (1769); d. 1791 (Hasegawa, *Daiganji shiwa*, 212).

<sup>133</sup> See Hasegawa, *Daiganji shiwa*, 126–128, for a brief description of these Jizō hall *dōshin*. Also see *DG* 5: 215–217 and 236.

knew the Kitain abbot was scheduled to visit this facility, on that day he opted to go drinking in the shops by the front gate. The next day he was expelled.<sup>134</sup>

Reliance upon *dōshin* was a necessity, but their numbers alone were insufficient to cover the deficit in personnel. Therefore, as noted earlier, network administrators like Jimyō often had work with the representatives of a temple's affiliated funeral/prayer families (*danka sōdai* 檀家総代) and village officials to maintain empty branches or *monto*. The laity, of course, could not substitute for an abbot at ritual functions (these would be conducted by a certified cleric from the head or another branch temple), and empty branches were legally owned and controlled by their regional heads. At the same time, the *bakufu* did recognize *danka* authority over the maintenance of their temple's grounds and material properties. Their purview included keeping the account books, compiling lists of temple holdings (lands, artwork, dishes, abbatial robes they had purchased, etc.), and the paying of taxes. If repairs became necessary while the abbacy was empty, the lay leaders filed petitions to the head for permission to use the temple's funds, and there are many examples of requests to cut and sell trees within the precincts for this purpose. Since a lay-managed temple might be in a separate village from the head or other branches, it was possible for predatory lay representatives to abuse their authority to cut and sell trees/bamboo for their own benefit. Hence other abbots in the network had to keep watch over lay managers, which amounted to an additional duty placed on their shoulders.

## 5. Conclusion

Although clerics in the early 1800s might not have foreseen the challenges that appeared in the last decade of the Tokugawa regime, with hindsight we can see how the issues of vacancies and problematic disciples helped to set the stage for Kantō-area Buddhist temple reductions during the early Meiji period. For example, Murata Yasuo's 1999 study of Shinto-Buddhist separation at the start of the Meiji era notes that abbot-less and economically challenged sites were subject to removal or merger with a staffed temple.<sup>135</sup> According to his analysis, this led to the closing of over 550 temples in what is now modern Saitama Prefecture. Strong anti-Buddhist sentiments certainly drove acts of wide-spread temple destruction in other regions, and there were similar incidents in some districts of the Kantō, but the data on long-standing vacancies suggests the closings were also inherent to a process of structural rationalization for over-extended clerical communities. Now that we have better information on specific temples, it is possible to trace with greater detail and better nuance the long-term trajectory of changes to Buddhist temple infrastructures over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>134</sup> KN 4: 134. He was not the only miscreant who felt the temple's anger that day: Myōkanbō served in the administrative office, and due to some *faux pas* before the abbot's appearance, he was ordered into confinement.

<sup>135</sup> Murata, *Shinbutsu bunri no chihōteki tenkai*, 11, 29, 142–143.

The personnel issues with disciples also offers new insights on clerical transformations during the same period. In some respects, the stories help us to better understand the cause of popular visions of clerical decline in the last half of the early modern period. I have not delved into stories of clerical sexual activities that punctuate this narrative of overall deviancy, but we can see heterosexual or homosexual relations as possible modes of resistance (and personal expression) for disgruntled disciples.<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, even though clerics of the celibate orders (Shingon, Tendai, etc.) used the phrase “meat eating and being married” (*nikujiki saitai* 肉食妻帯) to denigrate members of the Ikkō School in Edo period sectarian disputes,<sup>137</sup> there are well known and often-cited claims that some “pure clerics” (*seisō* 清僧) of these schools may have had hidden wives and children.<sup>138</sup> Gorai Shigeru has further claimed that “half-cleric, half-lay” officiants at small temples who lived among they laity were a mainstay of Japanese Buddhism.<sup>139</sup> Given these correlations, there is value to further examining the role of disciple-oriented pressures on decisions made by rural and urban temple clerics of all schools to marry once the Meiji state rescinded the older penal codes for punishing fornication.

However, while the popularized stories of married clerics and claims of women on temple grounds fostered images of a wide-spread practice, the data on mid- to late-early modern temple poverty and vacancy suggests that it would have been difficult for rural clerics to maintain such a household. Furthermore, given what we now know of increasing oversight of temple matters by influential *danka* (who were often village officials with their own links to samurai authorities), any liaison between an abbot and a wife-like partner would have depended on implicit lay family acceptance and support, as well as the silent acceptance of other clerics in local sectarian networks. While certainly not impossible, such an arrangement would have required a unique set of understandings that depended on the silence of all parties.

Along the same lines, the records of individuals like Jimyō suggest that the image of clerical deviancy has occluded examples of abbatial diligence from scholarly narratives of early modern clerical life. The sense of responsibility to one’s temple and school is reflected in a Meiwa 2 (1765) tenth month entry by the Daiganji abbot Ben’yo in his *Miscellaneous Records* (*Zatsuroku* 雜録). The following commentary appears among his directives for running his temple:

<sup>136</sup> Of these choices, the former was more dangerous, because Buddhist and samurai authorities deemed heterosexuality be a major felony (*nyobon* 女犯). Apprehended disciples were subject to public exposure and later sectarian disciplining, while those of abbatial rank faced punishments ranging from island banishment to execution and public humiliation of the head. There are several studies of Buddhist clerics’ sexual relations with women and their punishments, but for a representative sampling of this literature, see Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman*, 14–26.

<sup>137</sup> Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman*, 36–57.

<sup>138</sup> For examples, see Morioka, “Sōryo saitai to jiin no seshū,” 31–42.

<sup>139</sup> Gorai, *Nihon no shomin bukkyō*, 31–42.



## Repairs

[While] it is needless to say that it is difficult to repair the many buildings, the abbot/educator in principle is not seated for his own ease. If he acts as the leader [literally “the roof ridge and beams”] of his school, working hard for his own temple is a given. In this world, it is worthwhile to engage in such labors. [A cleric] who becomes an abbot/educator and prefers his own ease is ignorant/deluded. [A cleric in this position] should strive to the point of grinding their bones and crushing their bodies. The abbot/educator is the hostage [guarantor] of their school. For example, even the abbot of a *hei[sō]* temple who has the heart [proper mindset] will not prefer his own ease. How much more so for the abbot/educator who, based on this, should take on the labor of beautifying the extant buildings of this temple.’’<sup>140</sup>

Ben’yo’s mid-1700s comments obviously refer to the duty of enhancing the physical infrastructure of Daiganji. However, considering his roles as the head of a Jōdo training hall and supervisor of local Jōdo temple networks, he was regularly engaged in the maintenance of the regional Jōdo personnel infrastructure as well. As shown by the records of Daihiganji, Kitain and other temples in the Kantō, Ben’yo’s early nineteenth-century successors and their contemporaries like Jimyō and Jōjubō struggled to meet the staffing challenges posed by the population and economic shifts, and the rise of educated and affluent lay families that affected Kantō society from the mid-1700s onwards.<sup>141</sup> Therefore, while the accounts of temple life that are a main source for this study do not carry the prestige of innovative doctrinal treatises, they do reveal how a small cadre of well-trained and dedicated rural abbots emerged from the training system to shoulder the heavy weight of managerial duties for their networks and communities. In short, Jimyō, Yūjitsu, Jōjubō, and Ben’yo’s activities were vital to Buddhism’s continuity, even survival, in the latter decades of early modern society. They were the ones who strove to recruit and train boys adopted from lay families, so that the next generation carried forth an understanding of their respective schools’ teachings and the ability to fulfil the ritual-social functions required of the rural clergy. Ultimately, these abbots set the foundation for succeeding generations who struggled to maintain the integrity of their temples and their schools amidst the more tumultuous changes wrought by the advent the Meiji government and Japan’s shift towards modernization.

<sup>140</sup> DN 5: 226. The original text was transcribed under the direction of the Hasegawa Kyōshun, who is Daiganji’s sixty-first abbot and former president of Shukutoku University 淑徳大学. I have translated the term *nōge* 能化 as “abbot/educator” to reflect the dual roles of these clerical leaders.

修復ノ事、建もの多きは修復難儀言二不及、能化ハ元自樂のためならず、宗門棟梁[なれ]ば自房の苦勞は勿論也 世界中手に及ぶ苦勞はいたすか克キ也 能化と成自樂を好むハ不覺也 分骨摧身あるへき也 能化ハ宗門人質也 縦ひ平寺の住寺[持]二而も心あるハ自樂をこのます況や能化をや、依之当山なども先建ものを全美いたし而の上の修復苦勞すへき也。

<sup>141</sup> Hasegawa briefly summarizes efforts to fill vacancies in the Daiganji network during this period (Hasegawa, *Daiganji shiwa*, 107–110).

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# *Book Review*





## Book Review

Jackson, Roger Reid

*Mind Seeing Mind: Mahāmudrā and the Geluk Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.*

Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism.

Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2019. 752 pages.

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Meditation is inherently a private act. Barring the employment of an explicit phenomenological method, which is necessarily reflective, meditative experience is only ever disclosed to the meditator. Of course, one could argue that all experiences are private, which to some extent is true, however sitting self-contained in silence for extended durations while watching the flickers of one's mind lends itself to a particular kind of privacy. Besides access to the inner world of a meditator through their own first-person description, which is actually very rare, the entryway is through written meditation instructions. While written prescriptions of a specific contemplative practice don't enable us to probe an individual's personal meditative experience, detailed procedural instructions enable us to understand the practices that meditators are *supposed to be* performing. So, in addition to the pragmatics of prescribing a contemplative practice to enact, written instructions provide loose descriptive accounts of meditative experiences. Fortunately, at least for those of us interested in the study of meditation, Tibetan Buddhist contemplative authors have recorded an astounding array of written instructions on various styles and techniques of meditation. Even given this extraordinary body of Tibetan contemplative literature, with both its prescriptive and descriptive virtues, the academic field of Tibetan Studies has paid relatively little attention to the study of meditation. With notable exceptions, studies in the field have largely been philosophical, historical, or biographical, and to a lesser extent modern cultural studies, with little attention given to contemplative practices that Tibetans have described, innovated, and performed. Roger Jackson's *Mind Seeing Mind: Mahāmudrā and the Geluk Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism* (Wisdom Publications, 2019) at once breaks away from this norm by providing us with an in-depth study of a specific meditation tradition in Tibet while traversing many of the familiar historical and philosophical trend lines that are crucial for understanding Geluk mahāmudrā.

With its origins in late Indic Buddhism, and transmission into Tibet during the renaissance period starting in the late tenth century, Mahāmudrā or the Great Seal had a deeply felt impact on shaping the views, practices, and lives of countless Tibetan contemplatives. Derived from meditation advice taught by the eighty-four *mahāsiddhas*, especially the poetic *dohā* works of Saraha (10<sup>th</sup> c.), the systems of mahāmudrā that developed in Tibet were synthetic blends of tantric yogic practices and pragmatic approaches to the Madhyamaka philosophy of emptiness. As mahāmudrā took root in Tibet, indigenous Tibetan authors shaped and elaborated the ideas and practices of the tradition, and in turn, gave new and diverse textures to mahāmudrā. From the early days of Buddhist transmissions from India to Tibet, mahāmudrā meditation has been indelibly associated with its South Asian forefathers Tilopa (10<sup>th</sup> c.), Nāropa (d. 1042), and Maitrīpa (986–1063), Tibetan progenitor Marpa Lotsāwa Chökyi Lodrö (1012–1097), and the lineage of oral instructions (*bka' brgyud*) that proceeded from him to his beloved disciple Milarepa (1040–1123), then to Gampopa (1079–1153), and the multigenerational network of their disciples that followed. In fact, it's relatively safe to say—though mahāmudrā (*phyag rgya chen po*) is a term with a broad semantic range—that mahāmudrā came to be a brand of meditation associated with the Marpa Kagyü order of Tibetan Buddhism. *Mind Seeing Mind* however tells a more complex story about mahāmudrā, one that is distinctively Geluk. With the nuance and reflection of a true virtuoso, Jackson situates what is self-referenced as the Ganden Hearing Transmission (*dga' ldan snyan brgyud*), and the process of the Geluk appropriation of mahāmudrā, in the broader context of the historical and philosophical discourse about mahāmudrā in Tibet.

The book is organized into five parts that detail (1) background to Geluk mahāmudrā, (2–3) early and later Geluk mahāmudrā, (4) perspectives on Geluk mahāmudrā including key issues and questions, and (5) translations of important Geluk mahāmudrā texts. In the first three parts (pp. 17–338), Jackson's formula in each chapter (1–14) is to systematically introduce key figures, provide a brief biographical sketch for each figure that includes when and where they were born as well as their social network of teachers and students, and to summarize key works authored by these figures that relate to mahāmudrā. Part 1 gives a survey of mahāmudrā in India with a focus on the sūtras and tantras, and influence of the mahāsiddhas. Part 2 discusses the transmission of mahāmudrā from India to Tibet, cites how the term mahāmudrā embraced an expanding set of referents—from sexual consort to buddhahood (p. 66)—and reviews the use of the term in the Kadam, Zhijé and Chöd, Shangpa Kagyü, Sakya, and Nyingma traditions. A point of consequence for our understanding of the history of mahāmudrā is the role that Atiśa (982–1054) and his Kadam circle of followers played in its early transmission. Jackson points out that mahāmudrā teachings from Atiśa were likely transmitted to Gampopa, and that the influence of these teachings was so important that it alters the narrative of stemming from early Kagyü origins, or at least, suggests that the mahāmudrā taught by Gampopa owes a great deal to Atiśa and the Kadampas (p. 73). The following two chapters are about this more normative narrative of mahāmudrā in early and later Kagyü traditions, following a historical trajectory from Marpa,

Milarepa, Gampopa, and their successors up through the Ninth Karmapa, Wangchuk Dorjé (1556–1603). These chapters provide synopsis of pivotal Kagyü mahāmudrā figures including Pakmo Drupa (1110–1170), Dakpo Tashi Namgyal (1512–1587), and Pema Karpo (1527–1592).

These first five chapters set the context for what is at the heart of this book, a study of mahāmudrā in the Geluk order of Tibetan Buddhism, which starts with a chapter about Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) on mahāmudrā. The later Geluk tradition tells us that Tsongkhapa, while in meditation retreat in the 1390s, transmitted to his disciple and fellow retreatant Tokden Jampal Gyatso (1356–1428) secret mahāmudrā teachings of what became variously known as the Geden Oral Transmission (*dge ldan bka' brgyud*), the Ensa Hearing Transmission (*dben sa snyan brgyud*), and the Ganden Hearing Transmission (*dga' ldan snyan brgyud*) (p. 145). This secret oral transmission, which included several teachings including Guhyasamāja and Cakrasaṃvara along with mahāmudrā, was allegedly recorded on an emanated scripture (*sprul pa'i glegs bam*) which had been presented to Tsongkhapa by the deity Mañjuḥṣa in a vision and was handed down successively from one lineage-holder to the next until roughly the time of the seventh holder, Pañchen Lama Losang Chökyi Gyaltzen (1570–1662). Pañchen Chögyen, as he is otherwise known, was the first to write down and publicize Ganden mahāmudrā (*dga' ldan phyag rgya chen po*) despite the fact that Tsongkhapa did not compose a single text or give “instructions on mahāmudrā practice of the sort that would be attributed to him by later Geluk tradition” (p. 161). Nonetheless, circa the year 1600, Pañchen Chögyen attributed these special secret teachings to Tsongkhapa in a series of four texts that would become the basis for an explicit Geluk tradition of mahāmudrā. These four compositions are *Highway of the Conquerors* and its prose commentary, *Lamp So Bright*; a *Mahāmudrā Lineage Prayer* that was subsequently expanded; and a biographical anthology of lineage figures titled, *Like a Treasure Inventory*. Jackson’s translations of *Highway of the Conquerors*, which becomes the root text of the Geluk mahāmudrā tradition, and *Lamp So Bright* are included in Part 5 of the book.

As Jackson notes, there is little textual evidence that the Geluk tradition of mahāmudrā publicized by Pañchen Chögyen was part of a transmission that preceded him (p. 165). Regardless, chapters seven to fourteen detail the contributions made by the central figures who explicated and transmitted this later Ganden Hearing Transmission in Central Tibet and Amdo, from Pañchen Chögyen in the 1600s to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. After Pañchen Chögyen, it wasn’t until a century and a half later that this distinct tradition received detailed instructions, and when it did, the teacher to impact mahāmudrā most dramatically was Yeshe Gyaltzen (1713–1793), a tutor to the Eighth Dalai Lama Jampal Gyatso (1758–1804). Yeshe Gyaltzen wrote ten works on mahāmudrā, the most by any Geluk author, and Jackson describes his most influential work, *Bright Lamp of the Excellent Path*, to be a “highly Geluk-centric text” (p. 260). Though this isn’t surprising that the tutor to the Eighth Dalai Lama composed a Geluk-centric work, it is significant for the broader discourse on mahāmudrā in Tibet because it signals an abrupt pivot away from even sympathetic credit to Kagyü

mahāmudrā traditions. Unlike Pañchen Chögyen's works before him, Yeshe Gyaltsen's writings bear little evidence that he was conversant with Kagyü presentations of mahāmudrā. Yeshe Gyaltsen's overt disregard for Kagyü contributions to its hallmark contemplative practice along with his reemphasis on a normative Geluk presentation of emptiness established by Tsongkhapa and fixed by Pañchen Chögyen was a double punch that both reduced reliance on the Kagyü tradition and rebranded mahāmudrā. These two consequential gestures—de-emphasizing any affiliation with Kagyü mahāmudrā and emphasizing the Geluk presentation of emptiness—along with a distinctively Geluk interpretation of what meditation is, dramatically shaped the tradition from the eighteenth century onwards.

As with any complex story, there is a tapestry of subplots that are woven through Jackson's magisterial book. Part 4, *Perspectives on Geluk Mahāmudrā*, addresses some of these undercurrent threads in the form of issues and questions, including comparisons of Kagyü and Geluk mahāmudrā, Saraha's role in the tradition, and sixteen doctrinal questions that Jackson identifies to be relevant from *Can a Single Realization Suffice?* (p. 391) to *What is Mind?* (p. 427). Interwoven throughout the book and made explicit in the section on *Geluk and Kagyü Mahāmudrā Compared*, is a plotline that I'd like to spotlight: the metamorphosis of insight meditation (*vipaśyanā*, *lhag mthong*). Though there are scripted practices, such as *sādhana*, too often contemplative practices are conceived as if they are immutable monolithic activities that persons perform, like anthems to be sung by each performer with the same melody and lyrics, regardless of circumstance. However, a closer look at the history of meditation in Tibet, and as Jackson's book certainly suggests – contemplative practices are profoundly private, creative, and contextually constitutive acts. A cogent example of this fluidity is the signature Buddhist practice of *vipaśyanā* or insight meditation. As Jackson's study teaches us, following Tsongkhapa's realization and articulation of emptiness as an analytical insight indistinguishable from dependent origination, the practice of insight meditation in the Geluk order was indefinitely altered. A new practice of insight meditation was born, creating the hallmark Geluk presentation that effectually was a Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka stylization of insight meditation. Crystallized in Tsongkhapa's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Awakening* (p. 154), this reformed insight meditation was reified by the Second Dalai Lama Gendun Gyatso (1475–1542) in his writings on how the Prāsaṅgika view relates to mahāmudrā (p. 187), assimilated as Geluk mahāmudrā by Pañchen Chögyen's *Lamp So Bright* (p. 212), and ultimately, canonized by Yeshe Gyaltsen's essentialized Geluk instructions on insight meditation (p. 278).

This has ramifications up to the present-day when the Dalai Lama teaches that sūtra mahāmudrā for the Geluk is based on a Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka analysis applied to a mind pacified by serenity or calm-abiding meditation (*śamatha*, *zhi gnas*) which provides the philosophical framework for tantric mahāmudrā in the Geluk (p. 335). Because the Geluk presentation differs considerably from mahāmudrā instructions detailed in Kagyü meditation manuals, this is consequential for the history of mahāmudrā insight meditation, and with the aid of Jackson's work, we can now chart this metamorphosis. For instance, prior to Pañchen

Chögyen's Geluk synthesis circa 1600, the Kagyü author Dakpo Tashi Namgyal, who completed his *Moonbeams of Mahāmudrā* manual in 1565 or 1577, criticized Tsongkhapa's presentation of insight meditation for using an inferential rational cognition to intellectually fabricate emptiness.<sup>1</sup> Jackson's chapter on Saraha, *Archer Among the Yellow Hats*, more thoroughly contextualizes this by stating that Saraha's verses, an authoritative source for Dakpo Tashi Namgyal and Kagyü authors, "do not provide a basis for the practice of Geluk mahāmudrā insight meditation, which remains strictly within the compass of the Madhyamaka approach developed by Tsongkhapa" (p. 379). This history of insight meditation in Tibet is complexified by reading Atiśa. Not in his renowned *Lamp on the Path to Awakening*, but in his less well-known, *Stages of the Path to Awakening*, the Kadam author prescribes instructions on insight meditation that differ significantly from the analytical style of meditation that utilizes reasoning, as found in his *Lamp*, but rather focuses on pointing-out the connate nature of the mind.<sup>2</sup> As noted, though Tsongkhapa's forebearer, Atiśa's meditation instructions likely influenced Gampopa and early Kagyü mahāmudrā.

Jackson's *Mind Seeing Mind* is a monumental contribution to the scholarship on Geluk mahāmudrā, and more broadly, to the history of Tibetan meditation (also monumental in size, weighing in at 715 pages!). This book will undoubtedly remain an authoritative resource for the study of mahāmudrā for years to come and should be included as a core reading in related graduate and undergraduate courses. In conclusion, there are however two, admittedly rather divergent, meta-reflections on the state of Tibetan meditation studies that Jackson's book has stimulated: the first is the neglected discourse regarding the politicization of meditation in Tibet; and the second is the importance for advancing scholarly methods in the study of contemplative practices.

From 1604 to 1605, the same time that Pañchen Chögyen was publicizing Geluk mahāmudrā, in the wake of the Ninth Karmapa's death and the coronation of the Fourth Dalai Lama by the Mongol Army, the Karmapa faction drove-out the Fourth Dalai from Tibet where he died twelve years later in exile. The Mongol Army led by Gushri Khan responded by appointing the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1642 who swiftly vanquished the Karmapa's political power along with its network of patrons and established the Ganden Potrang government in Lhasa. Many of the Geluk authors who wrote on mahāmudrā, as Jackson's survey attests, were political figures including Dalai Lamas, Pañchen Lamas, and their students and tutors. So, when we talk about a Ganden mahāmudrā, we must talk about the Ganden Potrang. Though Jackson acknowledges these conflicts and possible political motives (pp. 128–130, 237), I would like to underscore that the Geluk-Kagyü politics in Tibet during the time when Geluk authors were writing about mahāmudrā should not be reduced to background historical coincidence. As we have seen with the injection of Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka into mahāmudrā insight meditation, Geluk authors were keen to appropriate Kagyü mahāmudrā, and from

<sup>1</sup> Dakpo, *Moonbeams of Mahāmudra*, 66–67, 88, 98–103, 219.

<sup>2</sup> Apple, "Atiśa's Teachings on Mahāmudrā," 20–22.

Yeshe Gyaltsen onwards, minimize its Kagyü origins. The polemics of meditation was not so different than the polemics of philosophy in Tibet—as is evident in the rangtong/zhentong debates that infused intellectual discourse, including mahāmudrā (pp. 110–111, 336–337, 399–401, etc.)—and polemics, I would argue, was an effective rhetorical tool in the power politics of Tibet.

As mentioned, Tibetan Studies as a field has produced an unremarkable body of scholarship on the diversity of meditation and yoga practices in Tibet. Jackson’s book, while a very welcomed contribution, follows trend lines familiar to the field with its focus on historical, biographical, and philosophical dimensions of meditation. Now that we have Jackson’s foundational study on Geluk mahāmudrā, what’s next for the study of Tibetan meditation? How can we advance methodologies in the study of contemplative practices? To build on Jackson’s work, and hopefully other such foundational works to come in the study of Tibetan contemplative practices, I’d like to suggest that we devise new methods for analyzing contemplative texts, emphasize the need for ethnographic and contextual studies, and incorporate methods from the emerging field of Contemplative Studies. With a given historical context established, we can produce studies that analyze and interpret the contemplative mechanisms of a specific practice, such as mahāmudrā insight meditation, across its many recorded instances of instruction. This next level of focus on a specific contemplative practice would produce comparative studies of procedural instructions with extraordinary details about the architectures, descriptive contexts, and performative dynamics of a practice. Coupled with ethnographic fieldwork on practitioners, this method of textual analysis would give us salient insights into practices that have shaped incalculable inner worlds.

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## *Journal of World Buddhist Cultures*

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### **Purpose of the Journal**

The Research Center for World Buddhist Cultures at the Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Japan was established with the aim of forming an international research institute for Buddhism, which could respond to the serious challenges facing the modern world. An important mission of the center is to accomplish a wide variety of academic projects on Buddhism and thereby contribute to an increasingly globalized society. All knowledge is expected to be transformed into information in a globalized society. Thus, at its inauguration last year, the center also decided to publish an electronic journal to disseminate the center's research results more widely in order to fulfill its main purpose—in line with global trends of internationalization and informatization. Electronic journals have become indispensable platforms to interact with researchers, Buddhists, and adherents of other religious traditions outside Japan, and to cooperate with foreign universities and research institutes.

The Research Center for World Buddhist Cultures has started a new electronic journal, *Journal of World Buddhist Cultures*. In its long history, the Ryukoku University has accumulated a large body of knowledge on Buddhism. The center hopes to develop this knowledge further and actively disseminate it all over the world by means of this electronic journal, through which the center will also attempt to encourage international intellectual exchange and seek solutions to various problems facing people in contemporary society.

In contemporary society, people's values are significantly diversified and complicated, and we are indeed hardly able to recognize what is "true." *Journal of World Buddhist Cultures* will include not only scholarly articles on Buddhism, but also articles that respond as a guide to urgent problems that arise in every part of the world. Buddhism has been practiced all over the world for more than 2 500 years. The journal will invite submissions in which this universal religion is discussed from a global perspective.

In addition, *Journal of World Buddhist Culture* will also include reviews of books on Buddhism, records of lectures organized by the center, and a wide variety of translated works. It especially welcomes papers written in English. Through this electronic journal, the center hopes to establish an international platform for Buddhist studies and contribute to Buddhism's further development.

# **Objective of the Research Center for World Buddhist Cultures at Ryukoku University**

## **1. Comprehensive Academic Research of Buddhism**

Our objective is to contribute to the advancement of academic research on Buddhist philosophy, history, culture, and other relevant fields while searching for ways to respond to the challenges facing our modern world. By using effective and appropriate research methodologies, we aim to explore Buddhist topics that meet the needs and concerns of our modern world.

## **2. Interdisciplinary Research that Combines the Fields of Humanity, Science, and Religion and the Creation of New Wisdom**

By combining the three fields of humanity, science, and religion, we will explore the prospects of creating a new wisdom for the 21st century. We will aim to become a global research hub where scholars from both Japan and abroad can converse and interact in order to provide guidelines that can help address social issues and global crises from a Buddhist perspective.

## **3. Building a Global Platform for Buddhist Studies**

By collaborating with universities and research institutions in Asia, the Americas, and Europe, we will carry out projects with overseas scholars, Buddhist priests, and academics of religion. We will publish our research results through our website and publications and provide them in English and other languages. Also, by using information and communication technology (ICT), we will collaborate with overseas universities and research institutions in real time in both the graduate and undergraduate programs. In addition, we will build a system that can quickly respond to requests from overseas research institutions who may ask for information about local historical sites by employing various views from across the university.

## **4. Research Results that will Benefit the Undergraduate and Graduate Schools**

By collaborating on the curriculum for each academic area, we aim to build an integrated program that spans across all the departments. We will also promote participation in educational collaboration programs—not only within our university, but with other educational institutions as well. We will recruit short-term research fellows from graduate and post-graduate programs in and outside of our university, by providing research grants (scholarships) and publishing their findings online or on print.

## Significance of the Publication of *Journal of World Buddhist Cultures*

The Research Center for World Buddhist Cultures consists of following three research divisions: Basic Research, Applied Research, and International Research. Among them, the International Research Division plays a central role in the publication of the electronic journal.



### International Research Division

The International Research Division will be responsible for sharing information about the activities of the center with the international community while continuing the project of translating and publishing Buddhist canons and texts that was originally carried out by the Research Institute for Buddhist Culture. In addition to the publication of the e-journal and the management of the center's website, the division will also promote exchanges with overseas scholars, other Buddhists, and religious specialists through ICT. The division will encourage collaboration with universities and research institutes in different parts of the world, and sponsor international symposiums and invite scholars from overseas to attend them.

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