

# **Modern Japanese Buddhism – A Response to the Crises brought by Modernity**

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## **[1] Introduction**

I want to start by noting that I am not an expert on Buddhist scriptures and thought. I am a scholar and specialist of Japanese religious history with an interest in the development of the modern Buddhist organization. The aim of this presentation is to reveal certain characteristics of modern Japanese Buddhist history.

In Japanese Buddhist history there is an abundance of research focusing on the ancient and medieval periods, but modern Buddhist research remained inactive for a fairly long time until, about ten years ago when there was a gradual increase in books and articles. Also, in the English-speaking world there has been a succession of books issued during the past 20 years dealing with modern Buddhism. In October, 2011 we held an open conference entitled “Modernity and Buddhism” at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyoto, Japan (1). I served as moderator and participating speaker in what turned out to be a very fruitful dialogue on modern Buddhism between scholars from Japan, America, China, and South Korea. Unfortunately, this international meeting on modern Buddhism did not have presenters from the Theravada Buddhist tradition. Since I do not know anything about modern Buddhism in Southeast Asia, I was looking forward to learning more at this conference. I am delighted to have been invited to this symposium where I have the opportunity to speak with scholars from many countries and talk with the learned priests. My presentation is on the history of Japanese Buddhism with an emphasis on modern Buddhism in particular.

Perhaps the most noticeable feature of Buddhism in modern Japan is the point that monks and laity are really not so different. It is common for monks to be married and have children, and sometimes they drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes. The difference between the laity and monks initially seems to be whether or not they have shaved their heads, but even some monks now grow their hair. To avoid misunderstanding, I should point out that Japanese monks have officially been permitted to have wives since the modern era. In pre-modern times, monks received a special guarantee of status from the

government and were single, but since the modern period, monks in Japan have lost their special status and have become regular members of society who must pay taxes and who can no longer avoid military service. It is these characteristics in the history of Japanese Buddhism that I would like to speak about next.

## **[2] The history of Japanese Buddhism (1) Geographic location**

Japan is an island country located east of China and the Korean peninsula. The imported civilization of mainland China flowed into Japan over the years and shaped the historical character of Japanese culture. After the introduction of culture and artifacts from China, Ancient Japan developed and shared a common culture with China and Korea. Chinese characters spread as the common language and Chinese classics nurtured culture, education and religion for intellectuals of China, Korea, and Japan. The major power in East Asia was of course China. Korean and Japanese traditional culture descended from China and was each transformed according to their climate and history. Buddhism is one aspect of culture introduced from China, and the Chinese translation of scriptures helped forge the world of Mahayana Buddhism in East Asia.

When considering the history of Japan and the Japan of today, one must not forget that the Emperor and imperial family still remain symbols of political and cultural unification. In the seventh century, just around the time the country's unification was established, the king adopted the title of Emperor. Around the same time, the Japanese began to call their own country "Nippon" which means the origin of the sun. The concept of the Emperor was modeled after the Chinese Imperial system. When Buddhism was first introduced to Japan in the sixth century, it was accepted by the Emperors and nobles, and since that time, the Emperor and nobility became the guardians of Buddhism. The Emperors and the nobility remained the guardians of Buddhism for a long period, but after entering the modern era the Emperor strengthened ties with Shinto and its shrines, and abandoned Buddhism.

Kamata Shigeo, a scholar of Chinese Buddhism, describes the shape of modern Buddhism in relation to the three kingdoms of old (2). According to Kamata's theory, Japan retains a strong semblance of Buddhism from the Tang period (618~907), Korea shows commonly seen traces of Buddhism from the Sung period (960~1299), and Chinese Buddhism is predominantly an extension of the Ming (1369~1644) and the Ching (1616~1912) periods. I think Kamata's description is correct. The Chinese government changes often, and with each change Buddhism in former times could not survive, but Japan is a distant island country in which an older form of Buddhism has remained.

Next, it would be helpful to comment on the periodization of Japan. According to the periodization of Western history, we have the ancient, medieval, early modern and modern time periods. For the sake of explanation then, the ancient extends from the 6<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and the medieval from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The early modern runs from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century until the year 1867. The modern period starts with the regime change that occurred in the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and continues into the present. Using this system of periodization, let us follow the history of Buddhism.

## **(2) Ancient (6<sup>th</sup> ~ 12<sup>th</sup> century)**

It is still currently noted that monks, scriptures, and Buddhist statues were introduced to “Paekje”, a kingdom on the Korean Peninsula in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It is thought that from that time onward, a great number of monks from China and the Korean Peninsula were helpful in introducing Buddhism to Japan. At the start of the Tang dynasty, China came to dominate the vast region that expanded from the Silk Road on the West to the border with the Korean Peninsula on the East. The contact with China had an enormous influence in the surrounding countries. Buddhism, becoming popular in the Tang Dynasty, was transmitted to the peripheral countries. Consequently many temples were erected in Nara and Kyoto, the old capitals of Japan, and their rulers expected the nation could be protected by the power of Buddhism. Monks participated in rituals and it was believed that performing ceremonies brought security and prosperity to the Emperor and the nation. The Emperor was regarded as the ideal Buddhist king (chakravartin or “the Wheeling Turning King”) who protected monks and temples.

## **(3) Medieval (13<sup>th</sup> ~ 16<sup>th</sup> century)**

The most significant political movement in Japan during the medieval ages was the establishment of the regime of the warrior class. The warrior class sought to import a new form of Buddhism or Zen which was different from the traditional Buddhism. Zen monks from China were invited to open temples in Japan. Buddhism in Nara and Kyoto tied the Emperor and the Imperial court, but Zen was connected with the military regime of the warrior class. In the medieval ages, a new sect called Kamakura Buddhism was born. This Pure Land sect of Buddhism was based on faith in Amitabha which Honen, Shinran, and Ippen advocated. In addition, there was the new faith in the Lotus sutra which was preached by Nichiren. From this time on, these new Buddhists sects were not linked to the Imperial court and the military regime, however, they had a powerful influence on local regions through the spread of their faith among

warriors and farmers.

Medieval Japan is said to be the era of Buddhism. The first reason for this claim is that many sects originated during this period. Among these new sects, many of the monks became active in charity and the construction of temples. The second reason is that large temples established in the ancient period possessed land and came to be a powerful social influence. In addition to economic power, they also possessed military strength. The third reason is that during the 15<sup>th</sup>~16<sup>th</sup> century, the Warring State Period (the period of civil war), the Buddhist sects of True Pure Land and Nichiren engaged in anti-government movements by confronting the feudal lords. At the end of the Warring States Period, Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi attempted to unify the whole country by fighting against the Tendai monks of Mount Hie, the Shingon monks of Mount Koya, and the True Pure Land sect. This fact clearly indicates the powerful influence and deep roots of Buddhism in medieval society.

#### **(4) Early Modern (17th Century ~ 1867)**

I would like to discuss the early modern period in more detail than I have done on previous periods. In 1542, the Jesuit, Francisco Xavier came on a Christian mission to Japan from India and he left a major mark on the history of religions in Japan. Following the instructions of Xavier, many missionaries came to Japan and China. Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, two leaders who tried to politically unify Japan by limiting the influence of Buddhism as much as possible, welcomed the Jesuit missionaries and the new Western culture that accompanied them. So, as a result of two very important people, a Jesuit was successful in accumulating a large number of Japanese believers. Especially significant among those new believers were some of the feudal lords on Kyushu or a western Inland. Among those converted Christian lords, some were able to reap great profits by exchanging goods with Portuguese merchants.

After achieving national unification, Hideyoshi noted with surprise that the largest trading port in Nagasaki had been owned by the Jesuits. He assessed the rising tide in Jesuit missionaries to be unfavorable to national unification and ordered their expulsion in 1587. Japanese rulers began to fear that the Jesuits were the forerunners of the Portuguese army and a new military pressure was added into the political equation. They knew from hearsay that the Philippines had been occupied by Spain. Tokugawa Ieyasu became the sovereign of Japan after Hideyoshi, and he went on to create the Edo government which continued for about 270 years. Also, in 1614, Ieyasu prohibited Christianity and Christians were deported.

Ieyasu performed the following two measures in order to eradicate Christianity. First, Ieyasu initiated a policy to protect Buddhist sects and

temples (3). He gave territory for temples and provided economic assurance, but he also created laws and regulations that all monks had to comply with. The second measure was the establishment of the temple registration system. This system required the Buddhist monks to receive proof from the Japanese people that they were not Christians. In short, monks were required to ensure that people were Buddhists. To give a specific example using the funeral ceremony, it was required of monks to confirm that the dead body was buried in a Buddhist funeral service. In this way, all Japanese were buried in Buddhist fashion and received a posthumous Buddhist name. Moreover, this assurance of Buddhist affiliation wasn't limited to burial rites; monks in their everyday life had to ensure that people living in the temple area were not Christians. This temple registration system could not function throughout the entire country unless every district had temples; consequently, in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century many small temples were erected (4). The Edo government and the local government gave land to the temples and established an economic base.

Some researchers think that Buddhism was the established state religion during the period of Edo government. Given the fact that all Japanese had to formally become Buddhist, and that monks were required to perform Buddhist burials, the idea that Buddhism was the state religion seems quite possible. However, other beliefs such as Confucian, Shinto, and Shugendo, though different than Buddhism, may have coexisted in society since their belief and practice were not forbidden. If belief in religions other than Christianity was not banned, the notion of Buddhism as a state religion is called into question. Opinions on this issue remain divided, even among researchers. Ultimately, the temple registration system spread and every Japanese came to be buried in a Buddhist funeral ceremony. In fact, Buddhism came to be associated with the funeral ceremony to such an extent, there is even a word in the Japanese which refers to "funeral Buddhism" (5).

### **[3] Buddhism in Modern Japan (1868 ~ present)**

The focus of this presentation is to describe modern Buddhism. The new Meiji government that was established through a revolution called "Meiji Restoration" sought to abolish the systems and policies of the Edo government, and to establish a new society. With respect to religion, the role of Buddhism drastically changed as the Meiji government abolished the temple registration system and pushed forward policies for Shinto to become the new state religion. Next, it will be helpful to look at seven key points of change that occurred in Buddhism.

(1) The Meiji government confiscated the land that the Edo government and local government had given to the temples. Along with the loss of temple land,

many temples lost their economic base, suffered from economic hardships, and in some instances, were completely ruined. In 1871, the temple registration system was discontinued. As an alternative to the temple registration system, an attempt was made by the Meiji government to introduce a Shinto shrine registration system but it failed. Eventually, the government decided to create a system based on a family register as a means to control the citizens. Even though the temple registration system had become legally nullified, many people still continued to maintain their connection with the temple. For a long time people used to go to the temple of their designated region to request funerary services and memorial ceremonies from monks, and the habit of going to the temple still continues to the present.

### (2) The Separation of Shinto and Buddhism and the movement to destroy Buddhism

In March of 1868, the Meiji government released a decree separating Shinto and Buddhism. A law attempting to eliminate all elements of Buddhism from Shinto shrines had begun, and in the result of it, the destruction of Buddhist temples throughout the entire country took place by Shinto priests and nativists. This movement was the primary cause of Buddhist temple destruction throughout the country (6). One characteristic of the mountain temples was the syncretic convergence of Shinto and Buddhism, and many of these mountain temples were destroyed by the new decree separating Shinto and Buddhism, along with the movement to eradicate Buddhism. The decree separating Shinto and Buddhism was the first step taken by Shinto to implement Shinto as the new state religion; however, such a plan did not succeed. Since Buddhism had already become an integral component of Japanese culture, the Meiji government's attempt at eliminating Buddhism through the implementation of a law proved impossible.

### (3) The Office of Preceptors

Monks in the early modern period who supported the temple registration system were officials of the Edo government. The Meiji government deprived monks of their official role and revoked their privileges. If the Meiji government's policy to implement Shinto as the state religion would have succeeded, every Buddhist monk and temple would have been thoroughly lost to Japanese society. In the end, the Meiji government renounced Shinto as the state religion, established a Ministry of Religious Education, and began to utilize monks for the edification of the Japanese citizens. The monks were delighted to have their official status with the government restored. In 1872, the government appointed monks and Shinto priests to work together as instructors in the cultivation of the nation's people. However, when the Office of Preceptors requested monks to behave like Shinto priests, monks began to show

dissatisfaction. In 1877, The Ministry of Religious Education became obsolete, and in 1884, the Office of Preceptors was abolished. Monks were no longer officials of the state. As a result, Buddhist sects became independent of the government and were required to establish their own organization and to train monks by their own ways.

(4) The ordinance permitting monks to eat meat and marry

In 1872, the Meiji government issued the ordinance written below. Up to the modern era, monks enjoyed traditional privileges and a special status, but the following law revoked that special status and monks began to be treated as ordinary citizens.

“From now, monks may be permitted to consume meat, marry a woman, or grow hair by their will if they so desire. When not at work, monks may wear the same attire as ordinary people.” (7)

The most notable feature of the above mentioned law is the fact that monks were permitted to take a wife. For a long time in Japan, monks had been prohibited from marrying. The True Pure Land sect of Buddhism had long maintained a tradition of allowing monks to marry since the time of the founder, Shinran. However, in this instance the True Pure Land sect was an exception, as other denominations preserved the system which upheld the single status of monks. With the exception of the True Pure Land sect monks, the Edo government strictly prohibited any monks from marrying. The Meiji government abolished the privileges and status that were granted to monks by the Edo government, permitted monks to marry, and attempted to make monks appear the same as the laity or “common people”. This does not necessarily indicate that monks in Japan began marrying immediately after this law was established. Some monks thought this law contradicted the Buddhist precepts, and the notion of being able to marry took a long time to spread and take root amongst the Buddhist sects. Today, however, most monks in Japan are married men. The monk’s family takes residence in the temple, and the son of a Buddhist monk usually succeeds his father’s status. The basic requirement for being able to maintain a temple has become marriage and the birth of a son. Today, marriage is something more expected of monks than of ordinary people. Otherwise, it is not possible to obtain a successor to the temple.

Perhaps the primary reason that Buddhist monks from Asia might raise the criticism, “Japanese Buddhism is not real Buddhism”, is because Japanese monks are married. Marriage takes on the meaning of breaking the precepts. The result of monks marrying in Japan is that the differences between monks and laity have almost disappeared. It is not unusual for a Buddhist monk to also be a school teacher, hold a position in City Hall, or be employed in a regular business. It is a particular characteristic of modern Japanese Buddhism that a

monk can hold one of these side jobs.

#### (5) The Organization of Buddhist Sects

In 1884, the Office of Preceptors became obsolete, monks lost their official relationship with the nation, and Buddhist sects became private organizations. Because Buddhist sects became financially independent and they needed to establish educational institutions for the training of monks, they couldn't escape the call for organization and change. Since there was no assistance from the government, Buddhists were compelled to establish an independent organization. The director was at the center of the organization. Under the director, Buddhist sects were made into modern organizations committed to the education and training of monks.

#### (6) A Confrontation with Christian Missions

In 1858, in the year following the signing of the Japan–United States Friendship and Trade Treaty, Protestant, Catholic, and Greek Orthodox missionaries came to Japan and began their campaign. Although foreign people resided in settlements, the construction of schools for English learning and women's education had a significant impact on young people and women, and many Japanese were converted to Christianity. Christian missionaries were riding the trend of thought of a rapidly advancing civilization, and this invited a Buddhist backlash. Buddhist sects took a clearly confrontational stance against Christianity. According to monks working at the frontier of the Christian prohibition in the early modern period, Christians landing in Japan and trying to convert the Japanese to Christianity should not be permitted. Conflict erupted after a confrontation between Buddhist monks and Christian missionaries (8). In 1900, when the Meiji government proposed a bill to congress that would require Buddhist, Christian, and Shinto sects to be treated equally, the Buddhist community protested severely and the bill was rejected.

#### (7) The Influence of Western Buddhology

In 1885, Nanjo Bunyu began to lecture at Tokyo University after he had learned Sanskrit and engaged in Buddhology in the United Kingdom. This was the first opportunity for Western Buddhology to be introduced to Japan. Nanjo was dispatched by the Otani True Pure Land sect to Oxford University to develop his studies under Max Müller. After Nanjo, other scholars such as Takakusu Junjiro and Anesaki Masaharu continued to bring Western scholarship on Buddhism into Japan by introducing Western Buddhology to the Japanese academic community.

Ever since the sixth century, Japanese monks believed that the truth of Buddhism was written in the translations of Chinese scriptures. Western Buddhologists, on the other hand, insisted that the true teachings of the Buddha are not to be found in the Chinese scriptures, but rather in the Pali and Sanskrit

scriptures. The Pali scriptures were regarded as the most trustworthy since it was the oldest and it was believed to transmit exactly what the Buddha talked. As a result, Theravada Buddhism, which used the Pali scriptures, came to be viewed as having great worth, while the Chinese scriptures, which were viewed as a newer text, were thought to be a degenerate form of Buddhism. Such opinions of the Western Buddhologists brought confusion and opposition to the Japanese Buddhist community.

Now, I've raised seven points concerning changes in Japanese Buddhism in the modern era. In Buddhism there is devotion to what is called the "chakravartin" or "The Wheel Turning King" who is believed to be the ideal king in Buddhism that governs the country with justice. There is a long history of Japanese Emperors who have shown devotion to Buddhism, and seen from the side of Buddhism, the Emperor has been viewed as the nation's "Wheel Turning King". However, the Meiji government tried to create a modern secular state using Shinto rituals. The most significant crisis that Japanese Buddhism encountered was when the Meiji government relinquished their role as guardians for Buddhism and made a point of excluding Buddhism. The second crisis was when Christian missionaries arrived in Japan with the agenda of converting Buddhists to Christianity. In addition, the third crisis brought confusion and further shock to Japanese Buddhists when Western scholars of Buddhology introduced the idea that Mahayana Buddhism was not true.

#### **[4] The Crisis brought about by Western Buddhologists**

Modern Japan had the aim of becoming an advanced and progressive nation similar to the West, and in order to achieve this goal, the nation made an effort to gather and understand Western technology, science, and academics. Buddhist sects had also expressed interest in Western Buddhist scholarship, and young Japanese elites were sent to the West in order to study. At the same time, Western Buddhologists were conveying the message that Pali scriptures of Theravada Buddhism were the true words of the Buddha and therefore worthy of the highest esteem. Mahayana Buddhism, on the other hand, was perceived as being based on corrupt scriptures that were formed later. Young elites from Japan who studied in the West were perplexed when prestigious Western scholars denied the authenticity of Mahayana Buddhism.

In 1876, Nanjo Bunyu, who was dispatched from the Otani True Pure Land Buddhism, crossed to England with Kasahara Kenju in order to study with Max Müller at Oxford University. The purpose of the study was to research the Sanskrit scriptures of Pure Land Buddhism before translating them to Chinese. While investigating the Sanskrit scriptures of Pure Land Buddhism, the Otani sect also needed to demonstrate that their lineage extended back to the early

Buddhism in India. After arriving in London, Nanjo and Kasahara were able to meet Rhys Davids, the founder of the Pali Text Society and a representative Buddhist scholar. Rhys Davids recommended Nanjo to study Pali. Not only Rhys Davids, but other European Buddhologists in the late nineteenth century thought that Pali scriptures conveyed the true words of the Buddha, and Mahayana scriptures, which were thought to have been formed later, were judged as being of lesser value. Seen from this point of view, Pali became the most important language, Sanskrit ranked second, and Chinese were positioned third. At the first meeting with Max Müller, Nanjo and Kasahara were asked the purpose of their study abroad, but their inability to wholly answer this question remains an episode. Perhaps this account of their inability to answer is an accurate one. Nanjo and Kasahara did not study abroad of their own accord, but rather they were sent by the Otani sect of True Land Buddhists. Kasahara died young before the completion of his academic studies.

The master and pupil relationship between Müller and Nanjo remained a beautiful one throughout their lives, but they were completely at odds when it came to their views on ideal Buddhism. Nanjo, with the faith of True Pure Land Buddhism, did not accept Müller's claim that Mahayana Buddhism was not true. Müller was an academic teacher for Nanjo, but he was not a teacher of faith. After returning home, Nanjo took a teaching position at Tokyo and Otani University. He continued his research on Buddhist scriptures in Sanskrit and revised texts for Buddhist publication. He edited and published texts such as Large Sukhavati Sutra and the Amitabha Sutra. Nanjo must have heard Müller repeatedly claim, "Mahayana is not the true teachings of the Buddha", but despite Müller's protests, Nanjo never subscribed to Müller's way of thinking.

Müller had an interest in the Sanskrit version of the Amitabha Sutra, and after obtaining a copy through the help of Nanjo, Müller wrote a commentary. In this commentary, Müller argued that the Pure Land teaching was not the Buddha's teaching, and he urged Pure Land followers to discard the tradition immediately and return to the fundamental teaching of the Buddha.

"This Sutra sounds to us, no doubt, very different from the original teaching of the Buddha. And so it is. Nevertheless it is the most popular and widely read Sutra in Japan and the whole religion of the great mass of the people may be said to be founded on it. 'Repeat the name of Amitabha as often as you can, repeat in particular in the hour of death, and you will go straight to Sukhavati and be happy for ever;' this is what Japanese Buddhists are asked to believe: this is what they are told was the teaching of Buddha. There is one passage in our Sutra which seems even to be pointedly directed against the original teaching of the Buddha...There is a great future in store, I believe, for those Eastern Islands, which have been called prophetically 'the England of the

East,' and to purify and reform their religion-that is, to bring it back to its original form-is a work that must be done before anything else can be attempted" (9).

The Protestant missionary M.L. Gordon who came to Japan from the United States utilized the above statement from Müller in a controversy with the True Pure Land Buddhist monks, arguing that "Japanese Pure Land teaching is different from Buddha's teaching," and criticized Japanese Buddhism, in particular True Pure Land sect (10). In an era when Christian missionaries and Buddhist clerics disputed fiercely with each other, Müller's doctrine, which can be abbreviated as "Mahayana is not Buddha", worked to the advantage of the missionaries. Since European Buddhologists who possessed authority voiced this doctrine, it set off ripples that could not be ignored in the Japanese Buddhist world that was trying to introduce European Buddhology. In particular, Buddhist intellectuals could not ignore Müller's claim. If they were silent, then they would be tolerating the criticism of Mahayana Buddhism by Gordon and Müller, and acknowledging the accusation that Japanese Buddhism is not truly authentic.

#### **[5] The Objection of Murakami Sensho**

There are two Japanese thinkers that stood in genuine opposition to the claim made by Western scholars of Buddhism that "Mahayana is not Buddha". They are Murakami Sensho, professor of Buddhology at Tokyo University, and the renowned Zen missionary in America, Suzuki Daisetz Teitaro (D.T. Suzuki). First, I would like to begin with Murakami. He did not have the experience of foreign study in Europe and did not read Sanskrit or Pali; his expert knowledge was of Chinese Buddhist texts. Murakami's book published in 1901 on "Unified Buddhism" aimed at unifying the diverse, separated schools of Buddhist doctrines in order to construct a Buddhism that could resist Christianity and Western philosophy. In doing so he enunciated the doctrine "Mahayana is not Buddha." If Buddha were seen as a human being from a historical standpoint, it constituted the view that Mahayana could not be Buddha's teaching. However, Murakami emphasized: "I firmly declare "Mahayana is not Buddha's teaching, but in so declaring, I am a person who believes in a Mahayana Buddhism which underwent historical development."(11)

Murakami's claim "Mahayana is not Buddha" was quickly problematized within the Otani True Pure Land sect to which Murakami belonged. Criticism against him arose, and Murakami lost his institutionally recognized clerical status. In 1903 Murakami published his book "Critique of the Idea that Mahayana is Buddha's Teaching", which again reinforced his doctrine that "Mahayana is not Buddha." However, in that work he clarified that the problem

whether or not Mahayana was Buddha's teaching was a historical issue, not a problem of religious doctrine or of faith. As a historical matter, there was no question that "Mahayana is not Buddha;" but from the standpoint of religious doctrine and faith it was indicated that "Mahayana is Buddha." Such compartmentalization into a historical dimension and a faith dimension was intended to resolve the issue. I imagine Murakami supported the side of "Mahayana is not Buddha" but the dual dimensions can be understood simultaneously as an attempt to bring that claim under a kind of control. At first glance it looks like he is saying the same thing as Müller, but Murakami, viewing things from the faith dimension, also fearlessly affirmed "Mahayana is Buddha." His creation of a dual explanatory position—claiming both that Mahayana is not and is Buddha's teaching—was a unique characteristic in Murakami. Through his assertion that Mahayana was "a Buddhism undergoing development," and an entity of far more value than Hinayana, Murakami tried to overcome the prejudices of European Buddhologists who looked down on Mahayana.

Murakami is well known as a pioneer for applying the academic rigor of historical science to the study of Buddhist history. Murakami pointed out that the cultural settings of Buddhism in India, China, and Japan varied, but he developed the idea that because there is no discrepancy or sense of superiority to be found amongst the differences, they are equal. He noted that Indian Buddhism had developed discipline and a philosophical doctrine, Chinese Buddhism had evolved a philosophical doctrine, and Japanese Buddhism had developed a religious faith. In addition, he also indicated that one of the unique features of Japanese Buddhism is that its evolution was based on a nationalistic sensibility. Buddhism in India, China, and Japan are on equal footing, and their differences are due to cultural background and historic personality. Ultimately, he did not consider that Indian Buddhism was the only authentic Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism was not.

#### **[6] The "Eastern Buddhism" of D.T. Suzuki**

In the classification of Buddhism, there is Northern Buddhism and Southern Buddhism. Northern Buddhism went from Northern India across Tibet, Mongolia, China, and Korea, before coming to Japan, while Southern Buddhism refers to the spread of Buddhism in South Asia and Southeast Asia. However, it has been suggested that Japanese Buddhism is neither Northern Buddhism nor Southern Buddhism, but rather a third type of Buddhism classified as "Eastern Buddhism". This classification of "Eastern Buddhism" was first used for Japanese religious representatives in Chicago in 1893 at the World's Parliament of Religions conference (12).

There is no doubt that the concept "Eastern Buddhism" arose from a

strong opposition of Japanese Buddhists towards Western Buddhologists who underestimated Mahayana Buddhism. Inoue Enryō, a well-known intellectual of Buddhism, noted that Western Buddhist scholars had praised Hinayana Buddhism, but they didn't seem to know about the magnificence of Mahayana Buddhism. According to Inoue, Mahayana Buddhism is a religion that is in accord with the latest achievements of modern Western philosophy, and it can coexist with a scientific view of the world.

Four Buddhist monks and two Buddhist laymen made a showing at the World Parliament of Religion at Chicago in 1893. Their presentations on Buddhism were rooted in the doctrine of Mahayana scriptures. These representatives of Buddhism from Japan spoke of the Buddha as a fundamental principle and expression of the universe. The Western scholars' understanding of Buddha as a historical person was entirely different. Also, in order to avoid the condemnation by Westerners that Nirvana is a form of Nihilism, the Japanese representatives explained the Nirvana of Mahayana Buddhism. Far from being nihilistic, they explained that Nirvana of Mahayana Buddhism is an individual pursuit for spiritual attainment, and a dedication to using the wisdom attained in the selfless work of servitude for society. Furthermore, the representatives from Japan indicated that Buddhism has the ability to be compatible with philosophy and science. As pointed out by Judith Snodgrass, the Japanese delegation wanted Mahayana Buddhism to receive admittance as one of the world religions, and the presentations intended to gain the understanding of a Christian audience while presenting on the ethical system of Buddhism (13). However, the audience had many Christians and they did not genuinely listen or show much appreciation for the Japanese delegates. There was one exception, Paul Carus. He was in contact with one member of the Japanese delegation named Shaku Soen, and following the conference Carus began to work together with Shaku's disciple, D.T. Suzuki. For Carus, it was important to see the true manifestation of the Buddha in the world, and to have an optimistic understanding of Nirvana. Carus, rather than emphasizing Mahayana Buddhism in the silent repose of the meditating Buddha, discovered a Buddha that optimistically affirmed life, was active, and was filled with vitality. The Japanese delegates at the Chicago conference influenced Carus, but Carus's understanding of Buddhism also influenced Shaku and Suzuki.

In 1897, due to an introduction by Shaku, Suzuki went to Chicago to meet Carus and work together editing for a publishing company called "Open Court". Suzuki helped Carus with the work of translating Eastern thought to English, and while translating works such as *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, he wrote his own articles and books concerning Mahayana Buddhism. Among his works, *Outline of Mahayana Buddhism* is a thorough criticism of Western

scholars' disdain of Mahayana Buddhism, and an insistence as to the true significance of Mahayana Buddhism. The following is a quote by Suzuki.

“Naturally they (Western Buddhologists) came to regard Hinayanism, or Southern Buddhism as the only genuine teachings of the Buddha. They insisted, and some of them still insist, that to have an adequate and thorough knowledge of Buddhism, they must confine themselves solely to the study of the Pali, that whatever may be learned from other sources, i.e., from Sanskrit, Tibetan, or Chinese documents should be considered as throwing only a side-light on the reliable information obtained from the Pali.... Owing to these unfortunate hypothesis, the significance of Mahayanism as a living religion has been entirely ignored.” (14)

Suzuki cites seven characteristics of Mahayana Buddhism. “1) Its Comprehensiveness (Mahayana does not confine itself to the teachings of one Buddha alone)... 2) Universal love for All Sentient Beings... 3) Its Greatness in Intellectual Comprehension... 4) Its Marvelous Spiritual Energy... 5) Its Greatness in the Exercise of Upaya (expediency)... 6) Its Higher Spiritual Attainment... 7) Its Greater Activity.” Seen from these points, one can see that Mahayana Buddhism utilizes practical activities and universal love to rescue all sentient beings. Philologists of modern Buddhist studies would surely point out that when Suzuki spoke freely of his ideology of Mahayana Buddhism, he did so based on personal religious experience, not on an accurate understanding of Mahayana scriptures. It has also been discovered that the majority of Suzuki's Sanskrit spelling was incorrect (15). However, perhaps it was because Suzuki spoke so freely that he had a great impression on the American readers. Through his work with Carus, Suzuki learned in advance both English expressions and the American religious landscape. American readers were led to the study of Mahayana Buddhism and Zen by Suzuki, but before this occurred, Suzuki was already familiar with the American readers' thinking and preferences. If you look carefully at the seven characteristics of Mahayana Buddhism that Suzuki pointed out, they fit perfectly with the American view of life. Suzuki should be viewed as someone who attempted to engage the hearts and minds of American readers by speaking freely of an ideal Mahayana Buddhism based on personal religious experience. During Suzuki's second stay in America, from 1950 to 1958, he spoke of Buddhist thought, Zen, and Japanese culture, and he left a major impact in the United States. The 1960's in America saw the start of the beat generation and it marked a time when Zen and meditation became widely accepted. Perhaps one reason for this new receptivity is the influence of Suzuki's long stay in America.

#### **[7] The Colonial Period and another Aspect of “Eastern Buddhism”**

I would like to examine a different aspect of “Eastern Buddhism”.

Modern Japan is deeply connected to its colonization of the surrounding countries of Taiwan and Korea, as well as its invasion into China. For a long time, the center of civilization in East Asia was China. Throughout history, Japanese often went to China to learn from an advanced culture. In addition to Japan, many of the countries surrounding China were tributaries to the Chinese empire, and learned from the academic, cultural, and political institutions in China. Japan's victory over China in the Sino-Japanese War (1894~1895) marked a reversal in the relationship between these two countries. Due to this turn of events, the Qing government dispatched Chinese elites to Japan in order to learn Western knowledge. The purpose of the Chinese students being sent to Japan was not to learn about Japanese culture, but rather to acquire information about Western knowledge and culture(16). Below is a chart that introduces the increase in the number of Chinese students in Japan.

Table1: The Increase in Chinese Students sent to Japan (17)

The Year of 1896	13 Students
1902	500 Students
1903	1,300 Students
1905~06	10,000 Students

The rapid increase is dependent on the policy of the Qing government. In short, rather than sending students to study in the West, they transformed their policy and began sending them to study in Japan. In Japan there were many translations of Western academic texts, foreign students from China were easily able to learn about Western education and culture, and there was significant savings in cost and time by sending students to Japan instead of the West. Japan began to play the role of the Western country of East Asia. While studying the reformation of modern Buddhism in Japan, Taixu, a Chinese Buddhist reform leader who had a great influence in the Buddhist world of China and Taiwan, sought to revive his own Buddhist crusade. His disciple came to Japan to study Japanese Buddhism. In 1917 and 1925, Taixu also came to Japan and conducted a field survey of Japanese Buddhism (18). While in Japan, he discovered that each Buddhist sect has an organizational system, Buddhist education, and enthusiastic charity projects, but while making evaluations to these points, he also criticized Japanese monk's marriage, the sects for being divided and lacking unification of faith. Taixu returned to China and created a Buddhist school committed to education and social service under the tutelage of monks. He also advocated a type of "Human Buddhism" that emphasized the importance of aiding living humans rather than the spirits of the dead. In 1932, Japan

created a puppet nation out of Manchuria and Taixu protested against the Japanese and supported the formation of a patriotic Buddhist youth group.

It is a fact that Japan’s colonization of Taiwan and Korea, and its invasion into Asia left a deep scar on Modern Asia. Taiwan was ceded to Japan from the Qing Dynasty with the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. The government –general of Taiwan considered preserving the Taiwanese old customs at the beginning, but in 1919 they adopted a policy of the assimilation of Taiwanese people into Japanese. Many of the elites that were studying in Japan returned to Taiwan and engaged in anti-Japanese protests. Many Buddhist sects from Japan had the aim of increasing Japanese members living in Taiwan, but they were also seeking for the local people of Taiwan to become believers. It is said that in the fifty years of the colonial era, Japanese Buddhist sects established 65 temples and 148 missions (19). Among the various Buddhist sects, The Honganji True Pure Land School, as well as the Rinzai and Soto sects were particularly active in Taiwan.

Table2: An Increase in Taiwanese Students sent to Japan (20)

The year of 1910	89 Students
1911	131 Students
1912	196 Students
1913	305 Students
1922	2,400 Students

In Korea, after the Sino-Japanese War, the Honganji Pure Land Buddhism advanced, and after the Russo-Japanese War, Soto, Rinzai, and Shingon sects began to spread. In many cases, the Buddhist missions were targeting the Japanese living in Korea. The annexation of Korea occurred in 1910, and in 1911 the main temples ordinance was released and Korean Buddhism came under its control. The government-general of Korea attempted to regulate religion in order to conduct a smooth control over people of Korea (21). From this point on, the number of Korean Buddhists studying in Japan increased every year. According to a 1938 record, the Honganji True Pure Land sect had temples and missions totaling 134, the Soto sect had 117, the Otani True Pure Land sect had 90, the Pure Land had 56, and the Nichiren sect had 48 (22).

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, elite students who had come to Japan to receive a modern education returned to their home countries in China, Korea, and Taiwan. It was the era when Japan was a center for education and science in East Asia, and it was a time when Japanese Buddhism influenced Buddhists of China, Korea, and Taiwan widely. We could name it an “Eastern Buddhism” that was centered in Japan and thrust upon China, Korea, and Taiwan. This colonial

aspect of “Eastern Buddhism” perished with the defeat of Japan in 1945. The American Carus, along with Suzuki, had sown the seeds of “Eastern Buddhism”, and they grew into the Buddhist boom of the 1960’s as meditation grew in popularity, and “Eastern Buddhism” became a part of the American Buddhist landscape. As for the colonial policy of integrating East Asia into “Eastern Buddhism”, that was destined to disappear with Japan’s defeat.

I would like to summarize the conclusion of this paper. Modernity brought about at least three significant crises for Buddhism in Japan. First was the establishment of a modern secular government, which began to cease economic and political support for Buddhist sects and temples. Second was the activity of Christian missionaries from abroad whose intention was to convert Japanese people to Christians. Third was the introduction of Western Buddhology which functioned to deprive Mahayana Buddhism of authenticity. “Eastern Buddhism” which I discuss in detail in this paper was a reaction by Japanese Buddhists who wanted to resist Western Buddhologists and to recover their identity and confidence.

#### **Note**

(1)The report on the International Research Symposium as to “Modernity and Buddhism” was published in March 2012 by International Research Center for Japanese Studies.

(2)Chen Jintou, “Present Chinese Buddhism”, *New Series of History of Asian Buddhism*, No.8, Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 2010

(3)Tokugawa Ieyasu performed regulations to Buddhist schools and large temples and demanded them to follow the regulations. Though, it is worthy to note that he didn’t provide regulations with the True Pure Land sect and the Nichiren sect, which had resisted the control of local lords.

(4)Williams, Duncan Ryuken, “Religion in Early Modern Japan”, *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religion*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006

(5)“funeral Buddhism” is often used as a negative meaning when people want to criticize monks in Japan today Tamamuro Taijo who was the author of a book titled as “Funeral Buddhism” proposed to evaluate the historical significance of the funeral Buddhism.

(6)The purpose of 1912 temple control ordinance was to make Buddhist powers weaken. It would be interesting for us to compare this ordinance in China with the movement to destroy Buddhism occurred in early Meiji era in Japan.

(7)The ordinance permitting nuns to eat meat and marry was also issued in 1873 after the issue of the ordinance for monks in 1872. Regardless of this ordinance, almost nuns chose to be single. Opposite reactions to marriage between monks and nuns need to be explained from historical perspective.

- (8) Thelle, Notto, *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan: From Conflict to Dialogue 1854-1899*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987
- (9) Müller, Max, *Selected Essays on Language, Mythology and Religion*, London: Longman, Green and Co., 1881, pp.365-366
- (10) Gordon, M.L., "Max Müller's theory of Amitabha", *Journal of Cosmos (Rikugou)* vol.2 num.21, 1882
- (11) Murakami Sensyo, *Unification of Buddhism*, Tokyo: Kinkodousyoseki, 1901
- (12) When Suzuki became a professor at Otani University in 1921, he made efforts to establish the Association of Eastern Buddhist and published the journal titled "Eastern Buddhist" which has continued to today.
- (13) I own my knowledge about the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago to Judith Snodgrass's work. See Snodgrass, Judith, "Japan's contribution to Modern Global Buddhism: the World's Parliament of Religions revisited", *The Report on the 41 International Research Symposium "Modernity and Buddhism"*, Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2011
- (14) Suzuki D.T., *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*, New York: Schocken Books, 1963, p.11.
- (15) The commentary by the Japanese translator of *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*
- (16) Qian mon qing and Jin lin Xiang, *Comparative study of Modern Chinese Education*, Guang Dong: Guang Dong Education Publishing Company, 1996, p.60
- (17) *ibid.*, p.61
- (18) Liang Mingxia, "Japanese Modern Buddhism Seen from the Perspective of Chinese Buddhists, Mostly in the 1920s and 1930s" *Modern Buddhism*, No.18, 2011
- (19) Fujii Takeshi, "Overseas Activities of Japanese Buddhists", *New Series of History of Asian Buddhism*, No.8, Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 2010
- (20) Terada Yoshirou, *Japanese New Religion in Taiwan during colonial era*, Tokyo: Harvest Company, 2009, p.49
- (21) Han Sang Kil, "Japanese Buddhist's influence over Buddhism in Korea", *Quarterly Journal of Japanese Intellectual History*, No.75, 2009
- (22) Fujii, "Overseas Activities of Japanese Buddhists"