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Editors' Introduction

Meiji Zen

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A MAJOR GAP EXISTS in the scholarly literature on Zen Buddhism. Although studies of leading medieval Zen figures and institutions are plentiful and certain aspects of contemporary Zen in Japan have received attention, scholarship concerning developments in the various Zen schools for the period from the sixteenth until the latter half of the twentieth century remains scarce. Given the general characterization of Buddhism during this period as corrupt and doctrinally insignificant, it is not surprising that Buddhist scholars would turn their attention elsewhere. Particularly in Japan the study of modern Buddhism has not been regarded as the legitimate province of Buddhist studies (*Bukkyōgaku* 仏教学). Apart from a handful of Buddhist scholars, for example, IKEDA Eishun (1976; 1994), KASHIWAHARA Yūsen (1990), TAMAMURO Fumio (1987), and YOSHIDA Kyūichi (1996; 1998), those few individuals who have endeavored in this domain most often have been historians (HAGA 1994) or sociologists (HIKITA 1991), rather than Buddhologists. Although non-Buddhologists have made crucial contributions to our understanding of Japanese Buddhism in the modern era, overall they have paid relatively little attention to Zen. In addition, topics that are the mainstay of specialists in Buddhism, for example, doctrinal history, textual analysis, monastic training, and temple life, inevitably have been largely ignored. This incomplete understanding of Zen Buddhist history has helped foster the misapprehension that current practices, doctrines, and institutions—which have actually been radically reshaped over the past several centuries—are faithful transmissions from the eminent founders of the various streams of Zen in Japan.

During the past decade, the situation has slowly begun to improve in Japan, as evidenced by the founding of the Society for the Study of Modern Japanese Buddhist History (*Nihon kindai Bukkyōshi kenkyūkai*) in 1993 by such leaders in the field as Hayashi Makoto 林淳, Ikeda

Eishun, the late Ishikawa Rikizan 石川力山, Kashiwahara Yūsen, Kiba Akeshi 木場明志, Serikawa Hiromichi 芹川博道, and Yoshida Kyūichi. The society's yearly meetings, seminars, and excellent annual journal, *Nihon kindai Bukkyōshi* 日本近代仏教史, have provided much-needed venues for scholars studying modern Buddhist thought and history, the relationship between Buddhism and the state, and the development of modern Buddhist institutions. Although the society's members come from a variety of Buddhist denominations, a significant portion of the articles published in its journal have been devoted to various topics concerning modern Japanese Zen, including the origin of Buddhist weddings in the Sōtō denomination, the problem of temple families, and Zen and colonial policy. It is no accident that two contributions to this special issue on Meiji Zen are translations of articles by founding members of that society.

Over the past ten years more attention gradually has been paid to modern Buddhist history by non-Japanese scholars as well. Along with Notto THELLE's study of the interaction between Buddhists and Christians after the Restoration (1987), articles and general studies of Meiji Buddhism by Allan GRAPARD (1984), Martin COLLCUTT (1986), Winston DAVIS (1992) and, especially, James KETELAAR (1990) have provided a fresh look at the general context in which to place more detailed examinations of religious developments in the modern era. At the same time, a few specific issues in the history of modern Japanese Zen have also been examined by Western scholars. In particular, figures associated with the Kyoto school, for example, Nishida Kitarō and D. T. Suzuki, have been the objects of Western scholarly scrutiny. The question of the relationships, beginning in the Meiji era, among growing Japanese nationalism, the war effort, and Zen has been examined in such works as *Rude Awakenings* (HEISIG and MARALDO 1994) and, most recently, *Zen at War* (VICTORIA 1997). In a series of important essays on D. T. Suzuki and the emergence of modern Zen lay movements, Robert Sharf has also discussed Zen nationalism, while arguing that the reconfiguration of the notion of Zen practice and *kenshō* by Suzuki and the lay Zen organization, Sanbōkyōdan, mark a radical, modern break with traditional Zen monastic practice (SHARF 1994; 1995a; 1995b; 1995c).

There is, of course, much more to the history of Zen during the formative years of Meiji. At the same time that various Zen clerics and intellectuals contributed to the growing rhetoric of Japanese nationalism, they were shaping modern Zen institutions, doctrines, and practices. Although figures like Suzuki and Nishida profoundly influenced the modern Western understanding of Zen, they actually had little

impact on the practice of post-Restoration Rinzai, Sōtō, and Obaku Zen. As Sharf has noted in his study of D. T. Suzuki and nationalism, "the influence of these Japanese intellectuals on the established Zen sects in Japan has been negligible" (Sharf 1995c, p. 141).

If we are to understand the formation of modern Japanese Zen, we must begin to research the thought and actions of the leaders who controlled the established Zen denominations and the ordinary clerics who ran the thousands of Zen temples. In his study of Buddhism and modernization, Winston Davis has stressed the importance of these clerics and their temples, arguing that to truly comprehend the various Buddhist responses to the challenges of modernity, we must look at established temple Buddhism, which—rumors of its demise after the medieval period notwithstanding—remained during the Meiji era the "numerically, socially, and politically dominant" form of Buddhism in Japan (DAVIS 1992, pp. 170–71).

In the wake of the imperial restoration in 1868, denominational leaders and ordinary clerics, including those from the Zen schools, were confronted with numerous changes and threats. The outright violence of *haibutsu kishaku,* although the most prominent problem confronting the Buddhist clergy, was relatively short-lived. It was the transformation of the institutional and intellectual landscapes after the Restoration that proved a far more formidable challenge to the members of the Zen denominations. In short order the Zen clergy, like all Buddhist clerics, lost all of the centuries-old status perquisites that they had enjoyed, became subject to state mandates regarding universal conscription and compulsory education, and were confronted with the influx of new knowledge, technologies, and religions from outside Japan. Most of these factors had a corrosive effect on traditional Buddhist cosmology and praxis, which must have been especially devastating for those denominations like Rinzai, Sōtō, and Ōbaku that had valorized celibate, monastic practice.

Changes in the organization of the temple system were equally profound and disruptive of the status quo. As Meiji government leaders lurched from one position to another with regard to the relationship between state and Buddhist institutions, the Buddhist clergy saw the forceful nationwide strengthening of each denomination's head-branch temple system. Through a combination of state mandates and sectarian initiatives, all Buddhist denominations were profoundly changed by the creation of the chief abbot (*kanchō* 管長) system; the rise of sectarian universities; the compilation of state-approved uniform regulations and doctrinal summaries; the appropriation and redistribution of large portions of temple lands by the state; the open

establishment of temple families; and the general spread of the familial inheritance to the majority of local, non-training temples.

By late Meiji, these radical changes had given the three main Zen denominations much of the institutional shape and the sectarian orthodoxy with which we closely associate them today. In what ways was Japanese Zen transformed in the crucible of Meiji? In what areas was continuity with pre-Meiji sectarian identity, practice, and doctrine maintained? How did the Zen clergy continue their training and seize the opportunity created by the new environment of the Meiji era? It was in hope of providing at least partial answers to these vital questions that the current volume was conceived. As a result of space limitations we have confined the discussion in this special issue to the various Zen denominations, but it is important to note that the remaining established Buddhist denominations during this period, as well as parallel developments in Japanese Christianity, Shinto, and the new religions, are even more in need of thorough study. In limiting our discussion to Zen, we have artificially separated developments that cross sectarian lines. Furthermore, by concentrating on the Meiji era, we have underplayed the extent to which Meiji developments continued the numerous trends in institutional and doctrinal development that began during the Edo period. We have also inevitably curtailed examination of how the Meiji changes in Zen life played out during the rest of the twentieth century. Ultimately, a complete examination of Buddhism in the modern era will have to move beyond these artificial boundaries and place the developments in Meiji Zen in their wider religious, intellectual, and historical contexts.

The Articles

We originally had hoped to provide a selection of articles that would examine all three main Zen denominations in a balanced fashion, but we were frustrated to an extent by the relative paucity of research on the Rinzai and, especially, the Ōbaku denominations during the modern era. Although scholarly studies of the modern Sōtō denomination are not plentiful, there has been considerably more attention paid to developments in that Zen denomination than any other. As a result, studies of the Sōtō denomination are somewhat more heavily represented in this volume as well.

It is appropriate to begin any volume devoted to Meiji Zen with an essay by Ikeda Eishun, the scholar who has single-handedly helped define the field. Since the publication of his landmark pan-sectarian study of Meiji Buddhism, *Meiji no shin Bukkyō undō* (Ikeda 1976), Ikeda

has continued to produce a steady stream of articles and books on modern Buddhism. His latest book, *Meiji Bukkyō kyōkai/kessha shi no kenkyū* (1994), is an in-depth study of the institutional foundations of Buddhism and Zen during the modern period. This work touches on a wide range of subjects, including essays devoted to the formation of the modern Sōtō organization, the contributions of Ōuchi Seiran and Ōtori Sessō to the Sōtō organization, and the problem of ethics and the precepts in the modern era. The essay that we have chosen for this volume gives a terse overview of this important book and provides the institutional backdrop for the other essays that follow. Ikeda examines the formation of teaching assemblies (*kyōkai* 教会) and lay societies (*kessha* 結社)—ground-level sectarian organizations that played a major role in the establishment of modern Japanese Buddhist institutions. As in much of his other work, Ikeda describes these organizations from a pan-sectarian perspective, illuminating continuities and differences in the modern institutional development of the Shin, Nichiren, Shingon, and Sōtō denominations. His study reveals some of the tension that existed between competing religious regimes within each denomination. Although these teaching assemblies and lay societies were effective instruments for proselytization, Ikeda argues, that very success was frequently viewed as a threat by those in charge of the administrative offices of the denominations. As a result, the administrators of most denominations made efforts to co-opt the energies of the ground-level organizations by reabsorbing them into the central denominational institutions.

The success of teaching assemblies and lay societies was not the only source of concern for the leaders of the Zen denominations, as Richard Jaffe shows in his essay, "Meiji Religious Policy, Sōtō Zen, and the Clerical Marriage Problem." Jaffe provides a detailed examination of how the clergy in the Sōtō denomination dealt with one of the most vexing legal changes of the Meiji era, the end to state support for standards of clerical behavior. In the essay Jaffe alludes to many of the structural changes detailed by Ikeda in the previous essay and underscores how such legal and institutional shifts stimulated a variety of responses among the Sōtō clergy. He also suggests that during the modern period the Sōtō leadership found it difficult to uniformly enforce their vision of Zen practice within the denomination. The essay shows that the decriminalization of clerical marriage had far-reaching implications for other Zen denominations as well, a point that is demonstrated by references to the struggle over that practice in the Rinzai denomination in essays by both Michel Mohr and Janine Sawada.

During the Meiji era political as well as doctrinal differences were a source of intradenominational conflict. The late Ishikawa Rikizan, in the third essay, examines the struggle within the modern Sōtō denomination over the choices arising from the confrontation with modernity, nationalism, and imperialism. Ishikawa's essay is an important contribution because, instead of dealing with intellectuals on the margins of establishment Zen, it shows precisely how two Sōtō clerics, Uchiyama Gudō and Takeda Hanshi, responded to a state that was increasingly bellicose and jingoistic and how they dealt with the possibility of missionary activity in continental Asia. Ishikawa uses the biographies of the pro-colonization advocate Takeda and the anarchist Uchiyama to show how Zen doctrine and practice were used both to justify murder and aggression and to resist such tendencies. Asserting the fundamental ambivalence of Zen doctrine, Ishikawa concludes that the radically different stances taken by Takeda and Uchiyama to the events of their time were perhaps more a result of their individual personalities than their Buddhist training.

Given the attempts by the Meiji regime to enlist the active support of the Buddhist clergy in state moral suasion campaigns and missionary efforts within Japan and on the continent, it is natural that clerics in other denominations would be drawn into the political arena as well. Like Ishikawa, Janine Sawada considers the political implications of Meiji Zen and the influence of state policies on Zen practice. In her article she focuses on the interface between the state and Zen as revealed in the actions of two leading members of the influential Engaku-ji circle: the Rinzai cleric, Imakita Kōsen, and his lay disciple, Torio Tokuan. Sawada's analysis of Imakita's political posture underscores the degree to which Shinto and Confucian values had become second nature to most Zen clerics by the early Meiji period. Sawada demonstrates through her study of Imakita's reactions to the events of his day—the Seinan War, the Shindo uprising, and the establishment of a National Assembly—how Imakita strove to preserve Rinzai Zen practice at Engaku-ji. At the same time Sawada describes how Imakita's early tacit support for the Meiji regime grew into a "primitive conservatism" by the late 1880s. Although at first glance Imakita appears to have practiced a variety of political agnosticism, his conservatism found expression through the activities of such lay supporters as Torio. As Sawada shows, Imakita lent his full support to the conservative, nationalistic Buddhist organizations founded by his lay disciple Torio, the Myōdō Kyōkai and Daidōsha, and thus attempted to assert political influence indirectly. Interestingly, Sawada points to the relative absence of a distinctive Zen identity in these organizations and

argues that the specifically "Zen nationalism" that has received so much attention from Western scholars was notably absent in the writings of the members of the Engaku-ji circle during the first Meiji decades.

Even as struggles over the precepts and politics were being waged within the Zen denominations, some clerics attempted to carry on with their quest for awakening in relative isolation. In his study of Tōjū Reisō, Tairyū Bun'i, and Seishū Shūsetsu, Katō Shōshun concentrates on the relatively unknown Rinzai Mino line to illustrate the liveliness of Rinzai Zen practice in Meiji Japan. Katō places the training of Tōjū against the backdrop of the anti-Buddhist violence of early Meiji and the changing political context. He shows how, in the relative isolation of Mino, Tōjū and his teacher Tairyū begrudgingly tolerated the intrusion of the long arm of the state, in the form of the doctrinal instructor system, into their lives. Katō emphasizes the strategies employed by these Zen clerics to preserve their spiritual legacy in the face of the turmoil of Meiji. He illustrates how, despite the continual demands of the Meiji state in the wake of *haibutsu kishaku*, these monks did their best to continue their cenobitic existence and to pick up the pieces left by the widespread destruction of Buddhist temples and monasteries.

As Katō shows, some clerics did their best to continue the legacy of Edo practice despite the turmoil that surrounded them. In a similar vein, Michel Mohr's contribution, which concludes this volume, traces parallel developments in all three Zen denominations through an examination of the lives of several representative Zen figures, both clerical and lay. In this essay, the impact of state Buddhist policy once again looms large. But by examining continuities in Zen practice and scholarship across the Edo-Meiji divide, Mohr provides balance to most of the previous essays, which on the whole emphasized the novelty of Meiji Buddhist formations rather than the way in which the various styles of Tokugawa Zen served as the foundations for the creation of Sōtō, Ōbaku, and Rinzai identities. Mohr offers a concise overview of the various strains of Sōtō Zen united by Teizan and shows the growing similarity between Ōbaku and Rinzai Zen, thus leading us to question the doctrinal homogeneity that is usually attributed to both the post-Menzan Sōtō and the Ōbaku denominations. In the most detailed sections of his essay, Mohr discusses the renowned Rinzai master Nantenbō and one of his leading lay disciples, Hiratsuka Raichō, bringing into relief the various tensions between Nantenbō and other Rinzai masters, particularly Imakita Kōsen. Mohr details Nantenbō's critique of Imakita, Shaku Sōen, and the Engaku-ji circle—

without doubt the best-known Meiji Zen lineage—revealing that in the eyes of some of his peers Imakita and his disciples were more famous for "rationalized Zen" and the vivacious scholarly salon at Engaku-ji than for rigorous training in *zazen,* koan, and the precepts. Mohr, like Sawada, also stresses the continuing importance of influential lay disciples to such masters as Imakita and Nantenbō. In the case of Nantenbō, the increasing attention paid to training lay disciples was the direct result of his failure to make Zen training more rigorous in his own Myōshinji branch. Nantenbō attracted a number of well-known lay disciples, including Hiratsuka, General Nogi Maresuke, and General Kodama Gentarō. Again, despite Nantenbō's aversion to Imakita's style of practice, we can see parallels here with Imakita: both men were drawn through their disciples and their own political leanings into a position of complicity with the increasingly imperialist state.

The collected essays provide a glimpse of how Zen endured and was transformed by the changes of Meiji. They demonstrate that Buddhism in general and Zen in particular were neither stagnant nor without political influence. Through such figures as Ōtori Sessō, Imakita Kōsen, Takeda Hanshi, and Nantenbō, Buddhism remained an important force, influencing lay intellectuals and government leaders alike. During the Meiji years and on into the Taishō and Shōwa eras, Zen clerics and lay practitioners continued to reformulate Zen practice and institutions in countless ways. These essays address a variety of important facets of Meiji Zen, but many other problems remain sorely in need of study. It is our hope that this volume will catalyze future research.

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