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When Buddhism Became a "Religion"

Religion and Superstition in the Writings of Inoue Enryō

This article examines the process by which Buddhism became a "religion" in Meiji Japan (1868–1912). As part of the climate of modernization, foreigners, government officials, and the press increasingly identified Buddhism as superstitious and backward. In response, Buddhist leaders divided traditional Buddhist cosmology and practices into the newly constructed categories "superstition" and "religion." Superstition was deemed "not really Buddhism" and purged, while the remainder of Buddhism was made to accord with Westernized ideas of religion. Buddhist philosopher Inoue Enryō was crucial to this process. This paper explores "superstition" and "religion" in his writings, and it discusses the aspects of Buddhism that were invented and sublimated under the influence of this distinction. This paper argues that not only did Buddhism became a religion in Meiji Japan but also that in order to do so it had to eliminate superstitions, which included numerous practices and beliefs that had previously been central.

KEYWORDS: Religion – *shūkyō* – superstition – *meishin* – Inoue Enryō – Meiji – Shinshū – modernization

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When Japanese translators first encountered the English word "religion" in the international trade treatises of the late 1850s, they were perplexed and had difficulty finding the proper corresponding term in Japanese. There was no indigenous word that referred to something as broad as "religion," nor a systematic way to distinguish between "religions" as members of a larger generic category. Instead, words such as *shū* 宗, *kyō* 教, *ha* 派, or *shūmon* 宗門 were used interchangeably to designate Christianity, divisions within Buddhism, distinctions between Daoism and Confucianism, and different strands of intellectual thought (such as different schools of painting or mathematics).

Ultimately, some translators chose to render "religion" as "sect law" (*shūhō* 宗法) while others settled on "sect doctrine" (*shūshi* 宗旨) (Suzuki 1979, 13). Regardless, both terms were already situated in their own system of meaning, referring generally to a preexisting sub-categorization of Buddhist schools. Thus, insofar as these early attempts at rendering "religion" were deemed meaningful, "religion" was viewed as a type of teaching or ethical restraint attached to a specific sect. This representation reverses contemporary English usage of the term "religion," rendering it not universal, but instead a specific interpretation of the Buddhist dharma (*buppō* 仏法) or Buddhist way (*butsudō* 仏道). Put differently, "religion" was Buddhism (or a subset of Buddhism). Buddhism, on the other hand, was not a religion.

Over the span of the next fifty years this relationship would change. The term *shūkyō* 宗教 would become a translation for "religion," and Buddhism would join a category that now included Christianity and Judaism, but not Confucianism. More than a mere word game, this change of status would profoundly transform Buddhism. It would lead to sect restructuring, radical re-conceptualization of doctrine, and even a new term to refer to the tradition—a shift from the premodern norm "Buddhist law" (*buppō* 仏法) to the contemporary "Buddhist teachings" (*bukkyō* 仏教) (Shimazono and Tsuruoka 2004, 190). As I will argue here, central to the process whereby Buddhism became a religion was a Buddhist scholar and educator named Inoue Enryō 井上円了, who was popularly referred to with the unusual moniker "Doctor Monster" (Yōkai Hakase 妖怪博士).

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Rethinking Religion

> Strictly speaking there are no signs but differences between signs.
> Ferdinand de Saussure, 1910

In a recent book, *"Shūkyō" saikō* <宗教> 再考 [Rethinking "religion"], SHIMAZONO Susumu and TSURUOKA Yoshio (2004) call upon scholars to "rethink" the utility of the concept "religion" in the study of Japan, both by examining the historiography of the term and by questioning the degree to which it represents a category autonomous from such spheres as government, society, and economics. With its focus on Japan, *"Shūkyō" saikō* is an important contribution to an ongoing discussion about the construction of "religion" as a subject of academic inquiry (see also ISOMAE 2005). As Jacques Derrida and Russell McCutcheon have observed, religion is a manufactured universal—its boundaries and definition emerging from a very specific Christian-inspired academic discourse.[1] In the Japanese case, as demonstrated in *"Shūkyō" saikō*, this discourse has had a distorting effect on the way indigenous traditions such as Buddhism have been perceived (SHIMAZONO and TSURUOKA 2004, esp. 189, 192–96). Thus, according to the argument in *"Shūkyō" saikō*, one cannot study so-called Japanese religions without correcting for this influence.

This article intends to contribute to this discussion by focusing on a key Buddhist leader from the period when Japanese intellectuals were formulating the concept "shūkyō" (religion). I argue that the construction of this concept not only changed the way Buddhism was studied, but it also led to fundamental transformations within the Buddhist institution itself. Further, in addition to the issues noted by Shimazono, Derrida, and others, this article will address other systematic distortions inherent to the assimilation of the Western concept of religion.[2] To that end, I will make use of two key concepts from cognitive linguistics: the prototype effect and the conceptual web.

A number of scholars including Derrida and Jonathan Z. Smith have noted that, as a modern category, religion owes many of its contours to the specific structure of Christianity (DERRIDA and VATTIMO 1996; SMITH 1998). Nonetheless, various scholars treat the relationship between religion and Christianity differently. To articulate this relationship more clearly, I will make use of a linguistic theory about category construction called the prototype effect. The prototype effect has its philosophical antecedents in the writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein.

1. Derrida argues that this is the universalization of an originally Roman concept, a process he calls "mondialatinisation" (DERRIDA and VATTIMO 1996), while McCutcheon suggests that it was the academic study of religion that caused it to be manufactured as an autonomous category (MCCUTCHEON 1997).

2. Although it would be an overstatement to claim that these distortions are universal, I believe that they are not confined to the Japanese case.

In a famous passage in *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein argues that membership in a category is not determined by an essential defining quality but instead by "family resemblance" (Wittgenstein 2001, aphorism 66). He uses the example of the concept "game" where there is no single defining characteristic shared by board games, card-games, ball games, or Olympic games. All they have in common is a vague resemblance to one another. Prototype theory is an extension of this observation and considers the notion of family resemblance within categories in more detail. First proposed in 1973 by cognitive psychologist Eleanor Rosch and then popularized and amended by George Lackoff, the prototype theory states that categories are asymmetrical in nature.[3] They have a tendency to "center" around a prototypical member that comes to stand for the category as a whole. Following an example provided by Lackoff, "robin" is a better example of the category "bird" than the "penguin," despite the fact that by definition they are equally birds. A further consequence of Rosch's theory is that we do not produce checklists of essential features that must be ascertained before something is included in a category. Instead, she argues, new members are added by relating them to the prototype. As such, the prototype is the asymmetric center determining one's understanding of membership in a category and the basis from which we establish "family resemblances."

If this theoretical structure is extended to the manner in which the concept "religion" was formulated, it draws our attention beyond the explicit definition and toward the prototype from which the category originates. In at least the Japanese case it seems clear that the asymmetrical center of "religion" was much closer to Christianity than any Japanese tradition. Although not articulated in these terms, Meiji era intellectuals themselves noted this centering. For example, according to Murakami Senshō 村上専精 (1851–1929):

> Thinking that Christianity is representative of religion in general, they have made the wrong diagnosis and decided that religion consists of a set of blind beliefs outside the laws of reason. In other words, they have arrived at this misconception because they have formulated a definition of religion in general on the basis of Christianity.
>
> Murakami 1890; translated in Staggs 1979, 486

This prototype contributed to the widely noted use of "shūkyō" as a synonym for Christianity (Suzuki 1979, 13–17; Uesugi 2003, 361–63; McKenzie 2003, 23). As part of the process of translation, the previous associations of "shūkyō" (teachings of a school) were overwritten; to determine if something was a religion its "family resemblance" to Christianity was ascertained. This had a distorting effect on Buddhism. However, what was excluded from the category

3. See especially Rosch 1973, Rosch et al., 1976; Lackoff 1987. Although the theory has been further refined since its initial proposal it continues to play an active role in cognitive linguistics.

"religion" is nearly as important as what was included. Our study of this situation will be aided by reference to conceptual web theory.

The basic theoretic structure behind conceptual webs has its origin in Saussure's theory of the differential value of signs. Recalling the above epigraph, Saussure argues that concepts are defined exclusively through distinction from other concepts.[4] In the example he provides, the meaning of the word "mutton" is defined by exclusion from its neighboring concepts. It is distinguished from references associated with the living animal because there is already a term "sheep" which has that meaning. It does not refer to cooked pig because it is distinguished from the concept "pork." Concepts thus compete for conceptual space; if the term "mutton" suddenly vanished, all of its referents would go to its neighbors (SAUSSURE 1986, 114). Put another way, the meaning of mutton is entirely due to its position in the structure of a larger system of concepts.[5]

Over time a number of cognitive psychologists have heavily amended Saussure's theory. Their collective modifications can be summarized as follows: The relationship between concepts is distinctive and relational. In other words, concepts are nodes in a conceptual network and gain their function according to their links to other nodes, but a link can be variously defined. The meaning of the concept "mutton" does not lie solely in its difference from "sheep," but also in a relation that can include its similarity (GOLDSTONE and ROGOSKY 2002, 297). Further, concepts have relationships that are non-definitional—what Robin Barr and Leslie Caplan call "extrinsic features."[6] For example, the extrinsic feature of "hammer" is that it is "used to bang nails." Thus, although there is nothing in the definition of "hammer" that uses the concept "nail," it remains an extrinsic feature closely related to most people's concept of "hammer." In summary, it is this system of relations between neighboring concepts, intrinsic and extrinsic, that cognitive scientists such as Robert Goldstone call a "conceptual web" (GOLDSTONE and ROGOSKY 2002).[7]

4. "That is to say they are concepts defined not positively, in terms of their content, but negatively by contrast with other items in the same system" (SAUSSURE 1986, 115).

5. While Saussure's emphasis on this aspect of linguistic structure was influential, it has come under significant critique from several directions. Its extension into anthropological theory following the work of Claude Levi-Strauss was criticized by both Jacques Derrida and Pierre Bourdieu. Derrida argued against Levi-Strauss's belief in the fundamental nature of binary oppositions and, more broadly, that meanings in these structures are fixed. See DERRIDA 2003, 351. Bourdieu has focused on how practice and habit alter social and cultural structures and has further suggested that different meanings can underlie the same set of rules. See BOURDIEU 1977. This study, while using some aspects of semiotic theory, dispenses completely with the idea of essential binaries or universal deep structure to instead employ ideas from structuralism to study the construction of categories. It thus borrows less from Saussure than from some of his descendants in more contemporary cognitive science and linguistics.

6. BARR and CAPLAN (1987). Following GOLDSTONE and ROGOSKY (2002, 297), I am using "extrinsic" in a slightly different way than the full emphasis upon implied inter-conceptual dependency as it is used in Barr and Caplan's work.

7. While the boundaries of a conceptual web could in theory be extended to include all the

The value of "conceptual web" theory is that it draws attention not only to the concept of "religion" but also to the neighboring concepts in which it was situated. In particular, important to the Meiji era case was the distinction between the concepts of "religion" and "superstition" (*meishin* 迷信). As will be explored in this article, part of the process of constructing the category religion was a parallel process under which previously contiguous phenomena were excluded from "religion" through their definition as "superstition." Nevertheless, because this article's questions and method of inquiry are tremendously different from experimentation in cognitive linguistics, it follows that the scope of the conclusions will necessarily be different. It will not be argued that any of these conceptual webs are universal or essentially Japanese; instead, they will serve merely as guidelines for an analysis of the transformation of Buddhism in the period in question. With this in mind, what will be studied is not only the development of the concept "shūkyō," but also the effects its formulation had upon Buddhism—specifically, the influence of the Christian centered prototype and the distinction between neighboring concepts (particularly "superstition") that contributed to the transformation of Buddhism into a religion.

Historical Context, Echoes of Destruction

> [Buddhism is] full of superstitions, its effects upon the morals of the nation is most pernicious, it is involved with false science, and modern science will cut it up root and branch…. G. M. Meacham, Osaka, 1883 (Thelle 1987, 165)

Despite Tokugawa attempts to limit their power, the Buddhist sects in the dwindling days of the bakufu had strong ideological and financial resources at their command. Yet anti-Buddhist sentiments in the form of popular xenophobia and the National Learning campaign had begun to merge in a synergistic alliance that would prove damaging to Buddhism. When the Meiji regime took power, elements within the new leadership led the attempt to establish a new state creed and destabilize Buddhism. This contributed to an outpouring of popular sentiment in the *haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈 anti-Buddhist riots of the late 1860s.[8] In this movement, Buddhism was demonized as a corrupt and decadent foreign cult. In some regions, such as Satsuma, local leaders and raging mobs joined forces to burn temples, pull down icons, and decapitate statues. While the true scope and intensity of this movement has perhaps been exaggerated in later scholarship, its implications were magnified and reflected in the narratives of Meiji Buddhists themselves who represented *haibutsu kishaku* as the defining

concepts in a person's head, leading to a number of theoretical issues, this article will instead restrict the term to refer to neighboring concepts (loosely defined).

8. A literal translation of *haibutsu kishaku* is "abolish the Buddha, smash Sakyamuni."

moment of the era.[9] Thus, the effects of this destruction—both real and imagined—shaped the reactions of subsequent generations of Buddhists.

Beginning the Meiji era with this sense of crisis, Buddhist leaders often overcompensated to prove Buddhism's usefulness to the Japanese state or its compatibility with modernity (KASHIWAHARA 1990, 20–42). By internalizing the violence of the *haibutsu kishaku* movement, various Buddhists came to accept the charges of ecclesiastical decadence and intellectual backwardness without evidence. This expressed itself in different forms, including a new call for Buddhist doctrinal consolidation wherein teachings of the various sects (as well as Buddhism more broadly) were distilled and edited into cohesive units.

As part of this process Buddhist leaders worked to distance Buddhism from charges that it was backward and an obstacle to modernity. Inoue Enryō found a way to rebuke these claims. He asserted that Buddhism was a "religion" and that, as such, it was an essential part of "civilization" and could be beneficial for the nation.

Inoue Enryō

The man who would one day be popularly referred to as "Doctor Monster" was born Inoue Kishimaru 井上岸丸, 18 March 1858, in what was then the rural province of Echigo. For the first year of Kishimaru's life, his father Inoue Engo 井上円悟 was a priest of a small temple called Jikōji 慈光寺 that was affiliated with the Ōtani branch of Jōdō Shinshu 真宗大谷派.[10] According to the autobiographical account recorded in *Bukkyō katsuron joron* (INOUE 1877), the family was quite poor and as a child Kishimaru often lacked sufficient food and warm clothing.[11] Perhaps for this reason he did not play with the other local children whose activities were often focused around "food, drink, and games." Instead Kishimaru would take advantage of the rural location of his small village and hike along rivers and into the mountains.

Despite his family's poverty, Kishimaru was the oldest of six siblings and his

9. Although there were massive temple closings in the early Meiji era, in general this restructuring had less to do with the *haibutsu kishaku* movement then it did with an outdated system. Under the Tokugawa government temples could not be easily opened or closed. The result of the changing demographics over the late eighteenth century meant that in many cases the Buddhist sects were forced to support temples that no longer had any parishioners. Although it is not possible to demonstrate this conclusively, it seems clear that many of the early Meiji temple closures were attempts to consolidate expenses by the Buddhist sects. Nevertheless, the complete elimination of Buddhist temples in regions such as Satsuma did result from anti-Buddhist purges. For an example of Meiji era Buddhists and their attitude to *haibutsu kishaku*, see ŌUCHI 1904, 17–18.

10. OGURA 1986, 9. Although the exact year is not recorded, sometime during Inoue Enryō's early childhood his family moved to another Ōtani branch temple called Eikōji 栄光寺 located in a nearby village.

11. STAGGS 1979, 165. I have consulted both the original Japanese manuscript and the translation appearing in STAGGS 1979. For convenience, when cited the pagination refers to Staggs' translation.

father's designated heir, therefore, from an early age his parents invested heavily in his education. At the age of ten, Kishimaru was sent to a neighboring village to study the Chinese classics with a young doctor named Ishiguro Tadanori 石黒忠徳. Later in life, Ishiguro remembered Kishimaru as a talented pupil (Staggs 1979, 166; see also Ogura 1986, 10). During this period, Kishimaru became a novice in his father's Ōtani sect and upon his ordination took Enryō as his Buddhist name. He is most widely known by the name Inoue Enryō.

In 1873, at the age of fifteen, Inoue Enryō changed the focus of his studies from Chinese Classics to the modern West. Although there is no record of the motivation behind this change, it seems clear that he was caught up in the popular fascination with the West that followed the Meiji Restoration. Inoue began at a small school focused on Dutch, moved to the Nagaoka School of Western Studies one year later where he was a student and junior teaching assistant, and then in 1877 transferred to the Niigata English Academy. At this time Inoue attracted the attention of his sect's leaders, and after a brief period of training at the Higashi Honganji headquarters in Kyoto, he received a grant to continue his studies in Tokyo.

In 1881, after a period of preparatory learning, Inoue was the first Buddhist priest granted admittance to the prestigious Tokyo Imperial University. As an undergraduate Inoue specialized in philosophy, taking courses with Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), the newly-arrived American professor, and Hara Tanzan 原坦山 (1819–1892), a Sōtō Zen priest who was the first professor of Buddhist studies at the university. In 1882, while still a student, Inoue co-founded the Tetsugaku kai 哲学会 [Philosophical society].[12] He began by inviting some of his professors as well as other intellectuals and members of the Buddhist community, and by 1884 the Tetsugakkai had attracted well-known figures, such as government official and scholar Nishi Amane 西 周 (1829–1897) and fellow Meirokusha and ethical philosopher Nishimura Shigeki 西村茂樹 (1828–1902). Even university president Katō Hiroyuki 加藤弘之 (1836–1916) made an occasional appearance (Staggs 1979, 175). Perhaps even more important were the prominent Buddhist leaders who attended, including Hara Tanzan, Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1855–1944), Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 (1838–1911), Kiyozawa Manshi 清沢満之 (1863–1903) and Ōuchi Seiran 大内青巒 (1845–1918). After Inoue Enryō graduated with a Bachelor of the Arts in 1885, he continued his involvement with the organization and in 1886 it began publishing an influential journal, *Tetsugaku zasshi* 哲学雑誌, to which he was a frequent contributor.

Still, Inoue describes the period following his graduation as especially difficult. In the span of these two years, he rejected a position in the Ministry of Education, renounced his ordination as a priest, and lost a job as a researcher

12. Originally it was called the Tetsugaku Kenkyūkai 哲学研究会 [Philosophical research society].

at Tokyo Imperial University. Inoue attributes the cause of this to a great psychological sickness that left him bedridden for over a year. He would describe the origins of this illness as follows: "In fact, the anxieties involved in reforming Buddhism were the cause of my sickness" (STAGGS 1979, 181). Yet at the same time he was convalescing, Inoue managed to begin writing the book that announced his attempt to reinvigorate Buddhism (INOUE 1877)and founded the Fushigi Kenkyūkai 不思議研究会 [Paranormal research society].

It was this sense of progress that managed to lift Inoue from his depression, and by sometime in 1887 he had recovered fully. In his own assessment, he had discovered what would be his life's work: From this point until his death in 1919, Inoue Enryō engaged in a tireless schedule of lectures, teaching, and writing on a variety of subjects—all of which he described as being ultimately dedicated to the reformation of Buddhism. Inoue published numerous books, founded the Tetsugaku kan 哲学館 ("Philosophy hall"), which became Tōyō University, and transformed the Fushigi Kenkyūkai into an organization dedicated to the elimination of superstitions called Yōkai Kenkyūkai 妖怪研究会 [The monster investigation society]. Along the way he was awarded a doctorate at Tokyo Imperial University in 1896 and became a prominent educator and popular author with a number of famous and influential students both Buddhist and secular.

Inoue was one of the most important public intellectuals to insist that Buddhism was a legitimate member of the category "religion" (UESUGI 2003, 361–63). In his capacity as a philosopher of standing, with the authority of the Western discipline behind him, he was able to make greater progress in this claim than would have been possible for someone who was only a monk. Yet this process of insisting that Buddhism was a "religion" necessitated more than an expansion of the category of religion. As will be demonstrated here, it also required an excision from the substance of Buddhism. Thus, the two aspects of Inoue's career that are normally treated separately—"monster studies" and "reforming Buddhism"—served the same function in the transformation of Buddhism insofar as they split it into religion and superstition. This is consistent with Inoue's claims that both enterprises had the same purpose. As a result, it is in intersectional writings such as *Meishin to shūkyō* that his larger mission can be seen.

Meishin to shūkyō

About three years before he died, Inoue published *Meishin to shūkyō* 迷信と宗教 [Superstition and religion] (INOUE 2000a).[13] Intended as an introduction to his work, it recapitulates a lifetime of Inoue's other writings and lectures, even

13. I have used INOUE 2000a, which is volume 5 of Inoue's collected writings on monsters.

quoting whole chapters from previous manuscripts. Thus, it is invaluable as a starting point for a broader discussion of the structure of his ideas.

With respect to general structure, *Meishin to shūkyō* is a revised and much-expanded version of an earlier pamphlet, *Meishinkai* 迷信解 [An explanation of superstition] (Inoue 2000b). *Meishinkai* was written in response to a short section on superstition in the new government-sponsored national ethics textbook (*Kokutei shōgaku shūshinsho* 国定小学修身書). In this textbook, certain superstitions (discussed below) were identified by the Japanese government as dangerous obstacles to education and national progress. Although Inoue amends and expands this list in *Meishinkai*, he also strongly endorses the mission behind it. This should not be surprising; since at least 1887 he had been advocating the elimination of superstitions as an important aspect of his attempt to modernize Buddhism.

While *Meishinkai* is largely an expansion of the list of prohibited superstitions, *Meishin to shūkyō* combines the elimination of monsters with a reformation of Buddhism by introducing a discussion of religion. The resulting work is more than the sum of its parts, as it informs the reader of what superstition is and what religion (aka Buddhism) should be. The outcome of this enterprise is the construction of an artificial binary between the two terms of its title (superstition and religion), thereafter used as a literary device to dissect Buddhism. Dominantly the language of the book uses this binary in metaphors of covering and discovery; superstition is a cloud or cloth that obscures or wraps the true light of religion.[14] The entire work is an extension of this metaphorical structure in which "superstitions" are stripped away from Buddhism. Layer by layer, rituals, prayers, and invisible beings are lost until most of what is recognizably Buddhist has vanished. It is only here that "religion" is encountered and defined largely as a remainder—that which is not superstition.

Purging the Demonic

During the Tokugawa period the vast majority of interaction between priests and parishioners was for the purpose of practical, this-worldly benefits (*genze riyaku* 現世利益) or memorial rituals for the dead (*kuyō* 供養). The day-to-day life of Buddhist priests of all sects was filled with the performance of exorcisms, funerals, distributing healing charms, and spells for rain. Many of these rituals were intended for apotropaic purposes, banishing monsters, limiting their negative effects, or transforming the curses of ancestors and kami into blessings. Hungry ghosts (*gaki* 餓鬼) and demons (*oni* 鬼 or *ma* 魔) were an integral part of the worldview promoted by the Buddhist establishment; and one of the

14. For example: "as superstition's cloud of delusion disperses, the true moon of religion can be seen" (Inoue 2000a, 132), and, "However, along with this development the old clothes of superstition were removed, opening up the true face of religion" (Inoue 2000a, 265).

main benefits of seemingly unconnected activities such as lay ordination rituals, for instance, was to manage these sorts of supernatural entities.[15] Despite later revisionism, both demons and this-worldly magic were fundamental to Buddhism—in canonical texts and in daily practices.[16]

Central to Inoue's agenda for the modernization of Buddhism was the elimination of precisely these types of rituals, and he was especially focused on those that related to the darker sphere of the supernatural. The first forty chapters of *Meishin to shūkyō* comprise a systematic attempt to argue against the existence of monsters and curses. Summarizing this he writes, "monsters [*yōkai* 妖怪] are nothing but superstition, and to the same degree we could say superstitions are nothing but monsters" (Inoue 2000a, 131).[17] His contention is not only that this kind of belief is superstitious, but also that it has no place in true religion (or Buddhism). Thus, the apotropaic rituals and exorcisms commonly performed by members of the Buddhist establishment are for Inoue nothing more than superstitious accretions that have become attached to a pure religion, thereby obscuring its true meaning. Clearly this requires a selective reading of Buddhist scriptures, as works such as the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, the *Medicine Buddha Sutra*, and even the *Lotus Sutra* discuss both demons and the power of Buddhist exorcism, while a number of indigenous Japanese spirits and monsters were deeply intertwined with the cosmologies of the esoteric schools and occur in near canonical texts such as the *Keiran Shūyō-shū* 溪嵐拾葉集 (T 2410, vol. 76, 503–888).

Buddhist precedents for this particular purge of superstitions can be found in the writings of Kamakura period reformers such as Nichiren 日蓮 (1222–1282) and Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1263) who called for the exclusion of "evil points of view" (*jaken* 邪見). In Shinran's case, in the 化身土巻 *keshindo no maki* [transformed Buddha-bodies and lands] section of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証, he quotes a collection of Buddhist scriptures with the intention of demonstrating that divination and the worship of local deities is founded on provisional rather than absolute truth (Shinran 1: 255–92). Shinran's main argument is not that these spirits do not exist but the following:

15. As William Bodiford (2003, 261) argues about Tokugawa-period Sōtō practice: "These stories reveal several significant popular attitudes concerning Zen ordinations: they had the power to subdue evil, to prevent hauntings by ghosts, and to deliver one from the karmic consequences of evil deeds."

16. For canonical texts referring to the demonic or the magical benefit of scriptural recitation and Buddhist rituals see, for example, in Chapter 25 of the *Lotus Sutra*, "Though enough yakshas and rakshasas to fill all the thousand-millionfold world should try to come and torment a person, if they hear him calling the name of Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds, then these evil demons will not even be able to look at him with their eyes, much less do him harm" (Watson 1993, 299).

17. In this sentence Inoue is playing with the sense of the term *yōkai* as phantasm, as vanishing things.

> Those who believe the deluded teachings of evil devils, non-buddhists, or sorcerers foretelling calamity or fortune may be stricken by fear; their minds will become unsound. Engaging in divination, they will foretell misfortune and will come to kill various sentient beings…. They will suffer from poison, prayers to evil gods, curses, and the spirits that emerge from corpses.
>
> Shinran 1: 274

Here Shinran opposes divination and rituals for local deities because such practices are dangerous and lead toward madness and death. This worship of false gods is worse than simply mistaken belief because of demons' malevolent powers and their ability to lead people into wickedness—a point he reinforces: "Sometimes [evil] beings may appear in the forms of gods or bodhisattvas, or present figures with the features and marks of Tathagatas" (Shinran 1: 275).

Through this collection of scriptural quotes, Shinran is arguing against heterodox teachings precisely because evil spirits exist and can appear as deities. Thus, an "evil cult" is based on a "false belief" because it is incorrect about the origins of its power. For Shinran, false gods are manifestations of dark forces, demons masquerading as divinities, and should be avoided or stamped out. According to this model, then, superstition is not the nonexistence of magic but the ability of demonic forces to turn one away from the true teachings.

By contrast, Inoue considers foxes and monsters to be "superstitions" because they are not real and to believe in them is a mistake. While superstition is bad because it is an obstacle to progress, on a fundamental level the evil aspect of the supernatural does not exist because the supernatural is impossible. As a result, foxes and demons do not deceive but are themselves deceptions (not *mayowasu* 迷わす but *mayoi* 迷い, thus, to believe in them is superstition, *meishin* 迷信).

In *Meishin to shūkyō*, Inoue's aim to separate the monstrous from true religion is clear from the outset. Instead of a definition for superstition, he reproduces a list originating in the national ethics textbook mentioned previously.

1. Do not say that foxes or badgers deceive or possess people.
2. There is no such thing as winged goblins (*tengu* 天狗).
3. There is no such thing as curses.
4. Do not believe in dubious ritual prayers (*kaji kitō* 加持祈祷).
5. Do not trust in the efficacy of magic or holy water.
6. Do not put your trust in divination, whether by written oracles, physiognomy, geomancy, astrology, or ink stamp.
7. It is wrong to be concerned with omens and auspicious or inauspicious days.
8. Do not otherwise believe in anything that is generally similar to these things [above].

Using a list in place of a definition betrays the fact that "superstitions" have no common denominator. Instead they bear only a family resemblance to each

other; things as disparate as prayers and goblins are treated equally, and equally dismissed without qualification. However, a theme common to all of these objects is that they were either banished through the use of Buddhist exorcisms (in numbers 1, 2, and 3) or, in the case of the rest, performed by Buddhist monks or their affiliated quasi-lay religious practitioners (such as the *shugenja* 修験者). To be fair to Inoue, this list owes its origin to the larger governmental campaign to eliminate superstitions. He is therefore reacting to preexisting categories in his analysis. However, like many Buddhist reformers of his period, rather than rejecting the government ideology Inoue amplifies it and turns it toward Buddhism.

Starting with this list, Inoue spends the first half of *Meishin to shūkyō* expanding it and providing further examples of superstitions in what is essentially a bestiary of supernatural creatures from the Dog-God (Inugami 犬神) of Shikoku to *kappa* 河童 (and a plethora of other monsters). His modus operandi in this enterprise is to choose a geographical region, to name the superstitions particular to that area, to relate anecdotes about these superstitions, and then to dismiss them as false beliefs. One example can be found in this excerpt from his pejorative discussion of superstition in India:

> The place that preserves the most Oriental superstitions is India…. Everyone going to India could not fail to be amazed on seeing the natives' inner rooms. In their inner rooms, the walls, ceilings, and pillars have cow dung smeared all over them. When you ask them what the reason is for this, they explain it is because the cow is a divine animal and its dung has the ability to protect against illness and misfortune…I am forced to say this is an exceedingly filthy superstition…. Indian religion is [nothing but] crystallized superstition.
>
> (Inoue 2000a, 137–38)

Inoue discusses each region in terms of the local relationship between superstition and religion. His argument is that in all cases the two are intermingled, but following a Spencerian structure Inoue presents an explicit hierarchy of cultures in which the more advanced a civilization the more its religion has shed superstitions.[18] According to its place in this larger structure, Inoue holds,

18. Inoue takes pains to demonstrate that there are even superstitions in the modern West. For example as following:

> In the West, generally there is extreme dislike for the number thirteen…. Things like the thirteenth day, the thirteenth house number, the thirteenth room number are extremely unpopular. Especially, thirteen people simultaneously eating at a dining table is regarded as the most inauspicious. A few years ago, during my sojourn in England, I moved to a place on the southern coast called Bournemouth. For just one month I took up residence in a boarding house. This boarding house had exactly thirteen guests. However, during meal times the daughter of the house always added one guest to the dining room. If, however one guest were ill or eating out in a cafeteria, straight away the daughter would abandon her seat at the dining table. (Inoue 2000a, 132–33)

Japanese Buddhism is an advanced universal religion, but in order to claim its place it must distinguish itself from the Japanese superstitions with which it has become intermingled.

Also significant are the things not dismissed as superstitions, such as the kami, gods, buddhas, bodhisattvas, angels, or ancestral spirits.[19] This list demonstrates that Inoue's criteria for judging something to be a superstition is not simply that it is in conflict with science. *Tennyo* 天女 (Skt. *apsaras*) and *tengu* are equally lacking in scientific validation, yet Inoue only labels *tengu* as superstitions. All the supernatural is not rejected; it is only evil or monstrous creatures that are eliminated.[20] The result of this process of selective excision is an almost complete eradication of the demonic from the sphere of religion, thus, so-called real Buddhism. Inoue was not alone in this; the modern West is the inheritor of a similar movement that led toward religion more broadly being sanitized and purged of its shadows.[21]

Abandoning the Physical World

Returning to the list of superstitions that serves as the nucleus of Inoue's book, there are several items such as prayer rituals and divination that are not labeled as superstitions because of their connection to the demonic. Instead these practices are characterized as such because they are based upon belief in the miraculous powers of buddhas and deities. Inoue does not believe that these miracles are possible. He argues:

> in this world there are two aspects the material [*busshitsu* 物質] and the spiritual [*seishin* 精神]. [22] The transformations of the material world are controlled by physical laws [*butsuri no kisoku* 物理の規則]. Natural calamities and diseases originate in this area [the material world]. Therefore, if one wants to avoid natural calamities and diseases, there is no way other than through the control obtained from scientific research…. Therefore, neither the buddhas nor kamis nor religion have control over the material world. Instead it must be observed that [religion] commands the foundations of the spiritual world.
>
> (Inoue 2000a, 267)

19. Later ghosts will be a significant problem to Inoue and he will devote many pages to discussing their ambiguity.

20. Yet, as will be discussed below, even the "good" supernatural creatures are stripped of their power to directly affect the physical world.

21. In Japan as well, there are clear parallels in the writings of Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776–1843) who argued for the reality of kami and spirits while dismissing demons, ghosts, and goblins as a nonexistent. However, Hirata suggested that the dark aspect of the supernatural was a consequence of the corrupting influence of Buddhism.

22. The term *seishin* also could be translated as "psychological."

By asserting this sharp division of the world, Inoue effectively separates Buddhist philosophy from scientific theory. In so doing, he is able to advocate for the mutual compatibility between Buddhism and science, but his position is rooted in the belief that knowledge of the material world is the sole providence of science.[23] The origins of illness and earthquakes, then, are to be found not in curses or demons, but in the laws that govern human health or plate tectonics. Divination is always superstitious because it is based on the belief that something other than universal physical laws governs events in this world. Similarly foundational is the assumption that all events in the physical world can be apprehended through universal laws discovered through scientific means. Thus, for Inoue, apparently supernatural phenomena can be explained through scientific research. For example, in Inoue's discussion of will-o'-the-wisps (*kaika* 怪火), although he is not capable of providing a particular scientific explanation for them, he is confident that this explanation exists and that "…will-o'-the-wisps are a problem belonging [to the study of] physics, chemistry (*rika* 理化) and natural history (*hakubutsu* 博物), of this point I have no doubt" (Inoue 2000a, 189).[24]

As science is the only method of truly understanding the material world, beliefs that contradict scientific claims are by definition superstitious. Inoue states this when he writes: "Superstition is a thing endowed with the property of contradicting scientific principles (*gakuri* 学理)" (Inoue 2000a, 259).[25] One of the main ways to avoid superstitious thinking is to be educated not only in rational methods of thought but also in the current scientific cosmology.[26]

As a corollary of this argument, it is clear that, insofar as religious cosmologies refer to the material world, they are simply wrong (whether they are descriptions of Mount Sumeru or the Garden of Eden). This requires a radical, if not completely unprecedented, reinterpretation of much of Buddhist literature. Because the only acceptable picture of the material world is scientific in origin, any canonical statements that refer to physical laws or descriptions

23. He further argues that the difference between religion and science is sufficiently vast that scientifically-based reason will never be able to truly comprehend religion, writing:

> However, those people who receive an education today believe that they can use reason in the scientific sphere [*gakujutsu jō no dōri* 学術上の道理] to try and solve the religion problem [*shūkyō mondai* 宗教問題]. This is completely the wrong direction. It is as if carrying a ruler one could measure an object's weight, or one could see the [true] meaning of an object with one's eyes. This is laughable. (Inoue 2000a, 264)

24. Throughout *Meishin to shūkyō* Inoue explains monster superstitions according to an extended theory of perception that attempts to "psychologically" account for the existence of eyewitness testimony of *tengu* and other creatures.

25. See other examples, such as, "Not being well informed of scientific principles leads to the manufacture of superstition" (Inoue 2000a, 239).

26. For Inoue, a scientific knowledge of causation is essential to avoid superstitious thinking. For example, see Inoue 2000a, 241.

of the cosmos must be abandoned or subject to creative hermeneutics. This requires that one jettison Buddhism as a tradition of interpreting and theorizing about the external world. Nevertheless, Inoue does not acknowledge that Buddhism might be founded on a view of the physical world. Instead he repeatedly contends that Buddhism is fundamentally in accord with science (Inoue 1877, 350, 393, 435, 442). Thus, anything that seems to be in conflict with science is not "really Buddhism." Following this line of thought, Inoue was at the forefront of a piecemeal dismantling of Buddhist cosmology. As new scientific advancements were made, more aspects of Buddhism turned out not to be "really Buddhist" after all.[27] This process led to the increasing internalization (or "psychologization") of Buddhist theory; what had previously been taken as references to real physical objects now came to be seen as psychological or "spiritual" artifacts.

As can be seen in the above quotation, religion's domain is the spiritual world and this spiritual world has no direct power over material existence. Thus, the miraculous is impossible and prayers for this world's benefits are nothing but superstitions. This provides the basis for Inoue's dismissal of prayer rituals (especially *kaji kitō*), magic, and charms. While he acknowledges that these types of prayer are one of the foundations of popular religion, he dismisses them as rooted in ignorance, writing "The true sentiments of the curses and prayers the ignorant peasants (*gumin* 愚民) direct toward their buddhas and gods, are generally nothing but good health, longevity, lack of illness and prayers for good fortune" (Inoue 2000a, 260). Yet, as Inoue argues, neither kami nor buddhas can grant these boons. Thus popular religion is not in fact a religion at all but instead largely a superstition.

In the process of trimming Buddhism into a religion, Inoue has abandoned Buddhist geography, miracles, prayers, and in the end by implication every description in a Buddhist sutra that makes a concrete claim about the material world (unless by coincidence this description is completely consistent with science). This move has its parallel in the West. It is a reduction of the sphere of religious authority, where the universe has been bifurcated into an almost Cartesian duality with religion relegated to the metaphorical, immaterial, or at best psychological.

Manifestations of the Absolute

After the extensive elimination of "superstitions" that characterizes the first half of *Meishin to shūkyō*, there is not much remaining to fit into the category reli-

27. In the popular arena much is made of Buddhism's compatibility with science, including the following famous phrase attributed to Albert Einstein: "If there is any religion that would cope with modern scientific needs it would be Buddhism." However, it should be noted that this compatibility has its origins largely in the creative interpretation of Buddhist cosmology and metaphysics promoted by nineteenth-century reformers.

gion. In the last section Inoue provides for the first time a positive description of what religion, and therefore Buddhism, really is. He argues that all true religions as well as all true philosophies have a common essence. This essence for Inoue is something he calls: "the absolute" (*zettai* 絶対) (INOUE 2000a, 259–60).

As an important term in his philosophical system, "the absolute" recurs throughout Inoue's writings. In *Meishin to shūkyō*, it is described as the "true mystery" (*shinkai* 真怪) and he equates true mystery with the Christian "true god" (*makami* 真神), the Daoist "true man" (*shinjin* 真人), and scientific truth (*shinri* 真理) before finally coming to rest on the Buddhist idea of Thusness (*shinnyo* 真如, Skt: *tathatā*)—the absolute truth or the real aspect of all things. (INOUE 2000a, 262, 285–86). However, elsewhere Inoue attributes the absolute to Western philosophy, referring to the Hegelian absolute, although parallels with Kant's thing-in-itself are also made.[28] As Inoue states explicitly, both Buddhism and nineteenth-century philosophy have the same goal: to approach the absolute. He agrees that they do this differently, and he thinks that Buddhism is better at it than other religions such as Christianity, but by and large the focus for both religion and philosophy is nothing more than the absolute.

For Inoue, this absolute is not simply an abstract concept but instead the underlying reality of the universe, what he calls "the absolute world" (*zettai sekai* 絶対世界). Religion, then, is not just a forum for discussion; it also leads toward a true entrance into the absolute. Inoue writes:

> Furthermore, religion teaches the way for our relative essence [*sōtai no kokoro* 相対の心] to enter into the absolute world. In Buddhism, this is namely enlightenment in the turning away from delusion [*tenmei kaigo* 転迷開悟]. Illusion [*mayoi* 迷い] points at the finite nature, while *satori* [悟] points to the infinite. (INOUE 2000a, 304)

The process of "turning away from delusions" is for Inoue similar to the elimination of superstitions. It is through the purging of these false and provisional beliefs that one may recognize the absolute—an effort that for Inoue is largely an intellectual enterprise. Yet, this endeavor requires at its most basic level a distinction between what Inoue calls faith in superstition and faith in "true belief" (*shōshin* 正信) (INOUE 2000a, 261). This faith that Inoue renders alternately as *shinnen* 信念, and *shinkō* 信仰 is grounded in the aspect of the absolute that is beyond reason (INOUE 2000a, 260–62). It is this belief in the absolute that Inoue defines as true belief. According to this argument, any "religion" which is not directed at the absolute is not really a religion and thus ultimately a superstition. Diagnostically then, one must determine a belief's relationship to the absolute

28. INOUE also uses "zettai" in his discussion of Hegel's philosophy in *Tetsugaku yōryō* (1887), 103–105. Additionally, he uses the term and identifies it with Hegel in *Bukkyō katsuron joron* when he writes: "Now, what Buddhism teaches does not differ in the slightest from Hegel's theory of the inseparability of the two [absolute and relative]" (INOUE 1877, 410–11).

to decide if something is a religion or a superstition. Yet, the criteria for making this assessment are never presented.

In so far as Buddhism is concerned with either buddhas or bodhisattvas, the reference is only provisional, thus, Inoue writes:

> Then because the buddhas and the gods themselves are a designation awarded to the substance of the absolute [*zettai no hontai* 絶対の本体] embodied in religious aspect, they are from the beginning unknowable [*fukashigi* 不可思議], and beyond reason [*chōri* 超理]. For this reason, it is not possible to discuss them in the same breath [literally: on the same day] as irrational superstitions. (Inoue 2000a, 260)

With this neat move, Inoue succeeds in preserving the buddhas and the kami from charges of being superstitions. They are not founded upon irrational belief in false entities; instead they are provisional names awarded to the true absolute reality that is beyond reason. This distinction between "irrational" and "beyond reason" allows Inoue to divide the supernatural world with buddhas and the gods on one side and other darker manifestations of the supernatural on the other. Although one could, for example, designate the demonic as a manifestation of the absolute, instead the "good deities" of Buddhism and Shinto (and perhaps Christianity) are the only real manifestations of the absolute.[29] Unlike the range of other creatures (for example, winged goblins), the buddhas and the gods are not false or provisional mysteries; instead they are the representation of the absolute, what Inoue identifies as "the true reality." As a result, a religion based on these manifestations of the absolute has been strategically removed from the authority of science and rationality. As Inoue has informed us, while scientific findings can be used to eliminate demons, they will never be able to eliminate buddhas or the gods—entities having nothing to do with the physical world that science studies, but that are instead related to the transcendent world of the absolute.

From Practice to Belief

Another key aspect of the way that Inoue represents religion in *Meishin to shūkyō* is the foundational assumption that the core of religion is a series of beliefs rather than practices. While this might seem straightforward, as contemporary scholars Shimazono Susumu and Isomae Jun'ichi have both observed, in the pre-Meiji period Buddhism was largely understood as something one did, not something one believed. It was only under the influence of the Western concept of religion that Buddhism became a commitment to a series of propositions rather than rituals (Shimazono 2004, 192–96; Isomae 2002).

29. Inoue also argues that "this absolute is not a dead thing, it is instead a living thing" (Inoue 2000a, 263).

Throughout his writings Inoue demonstrates a consistent inclination to represent Buddhism as a systematic philosophy. This is clear in his early works, such as *Bukkyō katsuron joron* (INOUE 1877), and it is further expanded in treatises, such as *Shinshū tetsugaku joron* [The philosophy of the Shin School: An introduction] (INOUE 1892). In the latter, Inoue traces out the intellectual origins of the Shin School, relating it to other Buddhist schools and outlining the propositions upon which it is founded. He does not dismiss the recitation of the nenbutsu, but instead deemphasizes it by placing it within a larger philosophical system.

This pattern is continued in *Meishin to shūkyō* where Inoue explicitly identifies different Buddhist schools with different philosophical positions. In one passage, the Tendai School is parallel with Hegelian idealism, the Zen schools are compared to Schopenhauer, and the Pure Land schools are described as having a similar relationship to the philosophy of Schleiermacher (INOUE 2000a, 304). This approach indicates that Buddhist schools' differences originated exclusively in doctrine and not in the sphere of practice as well.

Further, in his construction of the superstition-religion binary, Inoue places religious ritual on the side of superstition, writing:

> The religious use of ceremonies [*gishiki* 儀式] and ornaments are not dissimilar to superstitions. However, they are a means for awakening right faith [*tadashiki shinkō* 正しき信仰] and as a result they are not harmful but also more or less beneficial. As such, they should not be arbitrarily destroyed (INOUE 2000a, 265).

Granting the expediency of ritual practice for encouraging faith, Inoue clearly indicates that ritual does not have independent value. Since prayers and mantras cannot encourage the intervention of the buddhas or kami, nor guarantee rebirth in the Pure Land, they are basically ineffective. However, unlike most of the other superstition discussed within *Meishin to shūkyō*, he believes that these ceremonies should not be arbitrarily purged. Instead Inoue grants their usefulness in the development of a relationship with the absolute. Yet, insofar as these practices are related to the absolute all particulars are accidental. It does not matter if one chants the name of the *Lotus Sutra* or performs a Catholic mass. Thus, while doctrinal distinctions are essential to Inoue's differentiation between religious groups, dissimilar practices are viewed as largely irrelevant.

Inoue's Buddhism

It should be apparent that Inoue has radically re-conceptualized Buddhism. By ceding to his version of scientific authority and purging superstitions, Inoue selectively eliminated much of Buddhism's cosmological structure. Gone are the various realms of existence and their attendant hungry ghosts and hell beings.

Also eliminated are all the darker creatures in the Buddhist pantheon. The only remaining entities are the buddhas and the gods; however, even they have been transformed into merely temporary names for an abstract truth. They are no longer capable of interaction. Existing as metaphors, they seem to have no purpose or autonomy in Inoue's larger religious model. The physical world is completely controlled by scientific laws and the spiritual plane, while mentioned, is never adequately described.

By becoming a religion, Buddhism has been reduced to a specific sort of personal belief based on faith in the absolute with perhaps a smattering of ethics. For Inoue, the goal of the Buddhist religion (of all religions) is movement from the relative to the transcendent. Yet, this movement progresses through intellectual contemplation of the unknowable, not through any of the daily practices of Buddhist lay or monastic life. Therefore, the ideal Buddhist is like himself, a Buddhist philosopher contemplating the limits of knowledge.

In his own practice, despite his self-identification as a Buddhist, Inoue does not appear to need the buddhas anymore. Ultimately, instead of taking charge of his father's temple, Inoue constructed a "Philosophy Hall" (*tetsugakudō* 哲学堂) where he enshrined four sages: Socrates, Kant, Confucius, and Sakyamuni. Presented together these figures served as a literal demonstration of Inoue's identification of the underlying similarity between philosophy and Buddhism. But this hall was not just a site for intellectual endeavors. Inoue referred to it as a place for spiritual practice (*seishin shūyō* 精神修養). Although he recognized the value of chanting the nenbutsu, Inoue also introduced "hail to the absolute infinite lord" (*namu zettai mugenson* 南無絶対無限尊), a mantra of his own invention. In his discussions of this odd phrase it is clear that Inoue is attempting to bypass the provisional names for the absolute (including, by implication, Amidabutsu) to directly praise his own individualistic personification of the infinite (Suganuma 1996, 1). Similar to other movements in Buddhism that aim to circumvent the provisional on the way to the absolute, in Inoue's assessment, the Buddha is himself only provisional and can also be omitted. While the Buddhism that remains after this reconstruction looks surprisingly similar to other nineteenth and early twentieth century efforts (like that of D. T. Suzuki) it has also been abstracted and transformed into something that bears little relationship to any lived religion.

The Buddhist Anti-Superstition Campaign

Inoue Enryō first made his call to revitalize Buddhism by eliminating superstitions in the mid 1880s. Although Inoue's early works, especially *Bukkyō katsuron joron* were widely read, there is little evidence for the direct impact of his personal anti-superstition campaign in its first ten years. Instead, a number of Buddhist journals began discussing the large-scale elimination of superstitions

beginning in the mid 1890s. By the turn of the century newer Buddhist movements such as the Shin Bukkyōto Dōshikai 新仏教徒同志会 (Association of New Buddhists), made the destruction of superstitions central to their agenda. From 1895 to 1910, the most influential Buddhist intellectuals in Japan discussed the value of eliminating superstitions. The group included Kiyozawa Manshi, Inoue Tetsujirō, Ōuchi Seiran, Sakaino Kōyō 境野黄洋, Katō Genchi 加藤玄智, Hirai Kinzō 平井金三, Unshō 雲照, Ōya Tokujō 大屋徳城, and Katō Totsudō 加藤咄堂, as well as others.[30] The proponents of this movement came from a large number of Buddhist schools, though a preponderance of them was affiliated with Shinshū. Some were proponents of radical movements, but others such as Unshō were members of the pre-restoration leadership. Although the lines of influence are difficult to trace in any definitive fashion, many of these individuals had direct connections to Inoue Enryō. The founders of Shin Bukkyōto Dōshikai (Sakaino Kōyō and Takashima Beihō 高島米峰) were former students of his. Others, such as Kiyozawa Manshi, Ōuchi Seiran, and Inoue Tetsujirō, were members of the philosophical studies association Inoue Enryō founded. Inoue Enryō advocated the elimination of superstitions well before any of these other authors; and, despite the lack of direct citation, the timing is at least suggestive. Thus, regardless of whether Inoue was the originator of the larger Buddhist anti-superstition campaign or merely its most famous member, it is clear that the sheer number of Buddhist luminaries alone advocating this type of reform demonstrates how important the elimination of superstitions was for the transformation of Meiji Buddhism.

Conclusion

Although space restricts a full demonstration, if one takes almost any of the conventional definitions of Buddhism—scriptural, institutional, legal, how the term *bukkyō* was used—there was a radical change in nineteenth-century Japan and this change was closely connected to the importation of the concept "religion." Scriptures were re-read according to new hermeneutics, Buddhist schools became "religious" institutions by emulating Christian structures, and the term "Buddhism" was used in a new context as a member of a class that now included Christianity but not Confucianism. "Buddhism" ultimately became a reference to a system of personal beliefs, but these beliefs were reconciled with larger state-mandated assumptions. Thus, Buddhist leaders such as Shimaji Mokurai could advocate the acceptance of the Shinto kami, while Inoue and others argued equally strenuously for the compatibility between Buddhism and science, and many leaders for different reasons advocated the elimination of superstitions.

30. Kiyozawa 1900, 1903, 1906; Inoue Tetsujirō 1895; Ōuchi 1902a, 1902b; Sakaino 1900; Katō Genchi 1900; Hirai 1901, 1909; Unshō 1901, 1907; Ōya 1909; Katō Totsudō 1904, 1908.

The pared-down Buddhism that resulted from these transformations succeeded in attaining legal and intellectual credibility as a religion, but in doing so it distanced itself from the actual practices of Buddhists—priests and layman alike. Despite the strenuous anti-superstition climate of Meiji Japan, many people continued to believe in monsters, they continued to have a need for faith healing, and they continued to go to Buddhist priests for the performance of magical rituals. Thus, the result of Inoue's efforts was an increasing dissonance between Buddhism as a "philosophical religion" and Buddhism as a lived practice.

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