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Bottled Anger

Episodes in Ōbaku Conflict in the Tokugawa Period

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During the Tokugawa period, conflict within or between Buddhist groups was tightly controlled by the government. Generally speaking, Buddhist groups restrained themselves and thus avoided the need for direct government intervention in their disputes. This article contrasts the general restraint characterizing conflicts between the Ōbaku sect and Rinzai Zen with a sharply contrasting example of a dispute between an individual Ōbaku monk and members of the Shin sect. This episode escalated to such a degree that the government stepped in to separate the parties and prevent an outbreak of violence.

The article details the episode itself, including the preceding events and subsequent sectarian responses, and discusses the doctrinal and personal issues that underlie it. A former Shin monk, Tetsugen, offended Shin believers with sermons on the Śūraṅgama Sūtra *in which he portrayed monastic observance of the precepts, especially those related to sexual misconduct and the consumption of meat and alcohol, as an absolute requirement regardless of sectarian affiliation. Shin believers interpreted this as a direct attack on their sect and its practices, and targeted Tetsugen as an enemy to be opposed through writings and face-to-face confrontation.*

During the Tokugawa period, the military government was generally quite successful in controlling public manifestations of conflict within the Buddhist world. Dharma debates were forbidden by law, as, of course, was armed fighting. Conflict was not completely eliminated, however, and when a new form of Zen, the Ōbaku sect 黄檗宗, arrived from China in the middle of the seventeenth century, a certain amount of friction ensued. Not only did Ōbaku present a challenge to several existing groups on the doctrinal level, but the new sect also successfully competed for human and material resources within the newly constrained world of Tokugawa Buddhism. Ōbaku's very success in attracting talented Japanese converts and acquiring a network of temples in its first decades in Japan made it appear a threat to the

older established sects. The resistance was particularly marked among those groups with which Ōbaku had strong institutional and/or personal ties. Most notable of these were the Rinzai Zen and the Jōdo Shin (True Pure Land) Buddhist sects.

In most cases of conflict within or between Buddhist groups during Tokugawa times, the threat of government sanction was enough to keep the disputing parties within the bounds of acceptable behavior. For example, although Ōbaku had its most significant conflicts with Rinzai, neither side allowed matters to get so out of control as to attract government attention. The new sect did, nevertheless, get involved in a few episodes with other groups that grew so public and violent that the government had to step in to settle matters. This article will focus in particular upon one such episode, known as "the incident in Mori," that involved an individual Ōbaku monk, Tetsugen Dōkō 鉄眼萄光(1630–1682), and members of the Shin sect. While physical violence was narrowly averted, largely because of government intervention, the episode resulted in a lingering hatred that found expression in the written accounts.

Ōbaku's Conflicts with Japanese Rinzai

In its home country China, Ōbaku had never been an independent sect but merely one lineage among many in the larger Rinzai family tree. When Yin-yüan Lung-ch'i 隠元隆歷 (1592–1673; Jpn. Ingen Ryūki) first arrived in Japan in 1654 and decided to stay on and establish his style of Zen teaching, he never intended to found a new sect. It was Yin-yüan's expectation—one shared by many of his Japanese hosts—that Ōbaku Zen would be incorporated into the existing Japanese Rinzai establishment. Ōbaku's evolution in Japan from a Rinzai lineage into an independent sect was marked by a significant amount of positive interaction with the Rinzai sect and, concomitantly, a high degree of conflict. The conflicts between Ōbaku and Rinzai masters and temples extended from the personal to the institutional levels.

Tensions between Ōbaku and Rinzai Zen arose from a number of interrelated factors, including internal doctrinal differences and the pressures created by external social and political concerns (Baroni 1993, pp. 95–136). Zen temples were competing for advantage with other Buddhist institutions in the newly constrained environment of Tokugawa Japan, where bakufu regulations had curtailed growth by restricting new temple construction and limiting temple restoration. The Bakufu had also taken steps to circumscribe relations between

Buddhist monks and the Imperial Family, a traditional source of both prestige and financial support for Buddhist institutions. As a new player in an established field, Ōbaku was initially at a serious disadvantage in acquiring temples and building a financial base, and its eventual success depended in large part on its ability to draw recruits from the ranks of the Japanese Rinzai sect. Rinzai (or, more often, former Rinzai) masters were instrumental in establishing Ōbaku's good relations with both the military government and the imperial family. In the more prominent cases, Rinzai converts brought their home temples with them into the Ōbaku network, thus increasing Ōbaku's economic base. The Rinzai establishment, therefore, had legitimate reason to see Ōbaku as a drain on its human and financial resources.

For the most part, conflict between Ōbaku and Rinzai remained on a highly civilized plane, never approaching anything like public confrontation or physical violence. Vituperative words were doubtless exchanged on some occasions by Ōbaku and Rinzai leaders, and not a few disparaging comments on one or another master's competence were recorded for posterity. The Myōshin-ji scholar Mujaku Dōchū 無著萄忠 (1653–1744) records a number of examples of critical remarks directed at Ōbaku masters in his *Ōbaku geki* 黃檗外記.[1] In one episode, Gudō Tōshoku 愚堂東寔 (1577–1661), then abbot of Myōshin-ji, is quoted as observing,

> To begin with, Yin-yŭan does not understand courtesy. I am the highest-ranking monk in the Zen monasteries of Japan. If he wants to spread his Dharma in Japan, then he should first come and consult with me. After that, it would be time enough to save sentient beings according to their ability. If I went to Ch'ing China, then I would do as much. And as for Ryōkei [a former abbot of Myōshin-ji who had become an Ōbaku monk], he's bald and wrinkled. He's old enough to know better. But when he encounters something new he gets himself turned upside down and loses his head. He is really to be pitied. (*Ōbaku geki*, p. 12b)

As this passage illustrates, far and away the harshest criticism was reserved for the founder and the more prominent converts to Ōbaku, who were viewed as either misguided fools or ungrateful traitors. While there are no comparable Ōbaku texts that conveniently compile critical remarks against Rinzai masters, there is little doubt that Ōbaku masters sometimes held their Japanese counterparts in contempt. For example, within the margins of one copy of the *Ōbaku geki*

[1] A complete translation of the *Ōbaku geki* is included in BARONI 1993, pp. 319–40.

are observations, obviously composed by a Chinese reader, to the effect that Mujaku wrote in kana because he did not know Chinese (MINAMOTO 1979, pp. 99–100). Nonetheless, despite antagonism on both sides, hostilities never escalated in such a way as to attract the unwanted attention of government officials.

The most public evidence of conflict between Rinzai and Ōbaku involved a formal change of rules designed to restrict Ōbaku's influence on Rinzai monks. In 1665, Myōshin-ji, one of the leading Rinzai temples of the day, altered its official regulations to explicitly forbid serious interaction between its monks and Ōbaku masters. Monks from the Myōshin-ji lineage were forbidden to take up even temporary residence at Ōbaku temples or to adopt distinctive Ōbaku rituals previously unknown in Japan. At that time, a number of Myōshin-ji monks returned to the fold under threat of expulsion. In a few cases individual monks were formally defrocked for adopting the Chinese style of dress and personal appearance characteristic of Ōbaku monks, accepting new Dharma names from Ōbaku masters, and altering temple rituals to conform with Ōbaku custom. In reality, this amounted to little more than Myōshin-ji's accepting the accomplished fact that these monks had defected from the ranks and joined the Ōbaku lineage. For the most part, the two groups averted overt conflict by parting company and keeping their distance.

Conflict between Ōbaku and the Shin Sect

Since Ōbaku teachings incorporate aspects of Pure Land practice, one might anticipate some degree of interaction and resultant conflict between the sect and Japanese Pure Land, in a manner parallel to its relations with Japanese Rinzai. On the institutional level, this does not seem to have been the case. Despite Ōbaku's identification in Japan as a form of Pure Land Zen or Nenbutsu Zen 念仏禅, Ōbaku did not see itself as either Pure Land or Nenbutsu Zen, and thus made no effort to establish ties with Pure Land temples or leaders. For their part, Japanese Pure Land leaders demonstrated no interest in the growing presence of the new Zen group. Apparently no connection, and thus no threat, was perceived at the institutional level.

Nonetheless, on a more personal level, conflict did erupt between the two groups. As in the case of Rinzai, personal connections existed in the form of Shin converts to Ōbaku, and again the harshest criticism was leveled at the most prominent of these.

The major episodes of conflict between Ōbaku and Japanese Pure Land Buddhism centered on the Ōbaku master Tetsugen Dōkō. The

conflict seems to have been based primarily on emotional issues of loyalty and betrayal, since Tetsugen had originally been a Shin monk. Born into a family of Pure Land believers, Tetsugen converted to Ōbaku Zen in 1655 at the age of 26 after meeting Yin-yüan, a newly arrived Chinese Zen master. Prior to that meeting, Tetsugen had been studying at the Shin seminary (later to become Ryūkoku University) in Kyoto along with other promising students from throughout the country. Apparently dissatisfied with his studies and personal progress and disturbed by unpleasant events within the Shin power structure, Tetsugen broke with the sect and returned to his native Kyūshū to visit with Yin-yüan.

Some years after his conversion to Ōbaku, Tetsugen began a major publishing project for which he remains well known: the Ōbaku edition of the Chinese Tripitaka, the only complete woodblock edition of its kind in Japan. In so doing, Tetsugen hoped to fulfill a vow he had taken to make the Buddhist scriptures easily accessible throughout the country. To finance the lengthy undertaking, Tetsugen drew upon his considerable skills as a public speaker. First in the Kansai region and later on extensive fund-raising missions to Kantō and Kyūshū, Tetsugen lectured at temples wherever he was invited, preaching on a number of favorite scriptures and promoting his Tripitaka project. In this way he solicited hundreds of small donations from ordinary believers in addition to major contributions from wealthy samurai and merchant-class benefactors.

As a former member of the Shin sect and an outspoken upholder of monastic discipline, Tetsugen engendered opposition, even hatred, among his former associates, who saw his emphasis on the precepts as a point-blank attack on Shin. On at least two notable occasions Shin believers engaged in open conflict with Tetsugen at his public lectures; the second of these nearly led to public riots, and there was a quite real danger of Tetsugen himself being injured or kidnapped. Government intervention became necessary to restore the peace, and a number of Shin monks were subsequently arrested. In addition to these more dramatic public examples of conflict, several Shin authors made Tetsugen a target of scorn in contemporary sectarian texts. It is also possible that Tetsugen wielded his brush against his former colleagues, since a number of texts from the period critical of Shin practice, unfortunately now lost, were attributed to him.

The public disputes arose when Shin believers attended Tetsugen's lectures in Edo and Kyūshū and took offense at his interpretation of the Buddhist teachings. At the root of much of the antagonism lay Tetsugen's deep dedication to the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra,* which he used as

his primary teaching text throughout his career as a monk of the Ōbaku school and lectured upon more often than any other sūtra. The principal reason for this was probably that it stresses one of his favorite themes as a reformer, the necessity for strict adherence to the monastic code. Before looking more closely at Tetsugen's understanding of the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* and its polemical possibilities vis-à-vis Shin, it is useful to review the events surrounding the two disputes, both of which occurred when Tetsugen was lecturing on the sūtra.

Unfortunately, in neither case do we have sources from both sides of the conflict that would allow us to compare versions. Descriptions of the first encounter in Edo are preserved only in Shin accounts (Akamatsu 1943, pp. 63–86; Yoshinaga 1942, pp. 30–32). Neither Tetsugen's writings nor those of his disciples mention this first encounter in any way. The second encounter, in Mori, was a more violent incident that escalated to the point of requiring government intervention, and for this reason we have Tetsugen's official affidavit and a subsequent letter to the local daimyō describing the event from his perspective. There appear, however, to be no parallel texts in Shin sources.

The Incident in Edo

In the autumn of 1669, after building his new headquarters and setting the carving and printing operations of his Tripitaka project in motion with adequate financing for the first ten volumes, Tetsugen set off for Edo on the first of many fund-raising trips. Until this trip Tetsugen was relatively unknown outside his center of operations in the Osaka-Kyoto district, but the Edo trip won him a new level of national exposure that aided his fund-raising in other parts of the country as well. During his time in Edo Tetsugen spoke on the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* at Kaiun-ji 海雲寺 in Asakusa. Tetsugen's official biography, the *Tetsugen oshō gyōjitsu* 鉄眼和尚行実, written by his leading disciple, Hōshū Dōsō 宝洲萄聰, reports that his lecture series was an overwhelming success and that donations were generous. What the biography excludes from its account is that Tetsugen debated, at least informally, with a Shin believer in the audience sometime during the lecture series. Tetsugen's choice of text as well as the themes he emphasized from it made it appear to certain Shin adherents that he was attempting to discredit their sect, in particular by stressing the necessity for maintaining the monastic precepts against marrying and eating meat. This confrontation sowed the seeds of a long-lasting controversy between Tetsugen and the Shin sect.

According to Shin accounts of Tetsugen's lectures at Kaiun-ji, Kūsei 空誓, the head monk at Myōen-ji 妙延寺, a Shin temple in Edo, challenged Tetsugen's interpretation of the sūtra, but was no match for Tetsugen in debate. "Kūsei exhausted his powers repudiating [Tetsugen's words] and arguing with him, but it was like a praying mantis taking on a chariot of war" (YOSHINAGA 1942, p. 31).[2]

Shin believers sent word to Kyoto, requesting that someone better able to defend the sect come to Edo and confront Tetsugen. Sectarian leaders at the head temple sent Chikū 知空, the second director of the Shin seminary and reputedly a master debater. Chikū, like Tetsugen, had studied under the Shin teacher Saigin 西吟 (1605–1663), and it is possible that the two men knew each other from their youth (AKAMATSU 1943, p. 65).[3] Unfortunately, Chikū arrived in Edo too late to debate with Tetsugen face to face on this occasion, having only reached the post town of Shinagawa on the outskirts of Edo when Tetsugen finished his lectures. Tetsugen departed immediately for Osaka, probably unaware that Chikū was on his way.

Thus the confrontation in Edo concluded without any immediate problems for Tetsugen, but also without any sense of resolution for the Shin believers. With no debate having taken place, the anger of the believers continued to fester, and word of Tetsugen's harsh attack spread to other regions. According to the *San'yo zuihitsu* 三餘随筆, written by the Shin monk Erin 慧琳 (1715–1789), Chikū initially took up study of the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* to prepare for his debate with Tetsugen, and subsequently lectured on the text himself with some frequency. He continued to refute Tetsugen's interpretation of the scripture both in his public lectures and in his writings. Although he apparently refrained from mentioning Tetsugen by name, the identity of his desired debating opponent was obvious.

Chikū maintained that other sects used scriptures like the *Śūraṅgama* and *Nirvāṇa* sūtras to criticize Shin for its married clergy and meat-eating because they themselves failed to understand the Buddhist Dharma, particularly the proper interpretation of the scriptures in light of the Three Periods of the Dharma. Lest Shin believers fall prey to these false teachings, Chikū provided the necessary scriptural proof

[2] This excerpt is from the ninety-second section of the *San'yo zuihitsu*, which is a compendium of two hundred questions related to Shin practice. The text was written in three fascicles by Erin.

[3] Chikū became Saigin's disciple in 1655, the same year that Tetsugen left to join Yin-yüan's assembly in Nagasaki. YOSHINAGA gives a short biographical sketch (1942, p. 32). AKAMATSU says that Tetsugen and Chikū studied under Saigin at the same time and that they were once friends (1943, p. 65), but I have found no primary source material to support this claim.

texts demonstrating that Shin practices fell within the appropriate norms of Buddhist ethics for the Latter Age of the Degenerate Dharma (*mappō*). To enemies who harped on absolute norms for the Buddhist clergy, Chikū countered that the scriptures tell us of two distinct types of bodhisattvas: those who leave the home life behind, and those who, like Vimalakīrti, remain at home with wife and children. Shin monks are of the second type.

The *San'yo zuihitsu* mentions several texts that seem to represent an ongoing written debate between Tetsugen and Chikū. While the texts attributed to Chikū are genuine, those attributed to Tetsugen are problematic, and the first, called *Hashaku hyōhan* 破釋評判, seems never to have existed at all—modern Ōbaku scholars have found no copies of the text, nor any external confirmation of its existence. The second book, entitled *Kōmori mōdanki* 蝙蝠妄談記, did indeed circulate under Tetsugen's name, but modern scholars consider it to be spurious (Akamatsu 1943, p. 80; Yoshinaga 1942, p. 32). It nonetheless embodies the type of anti-Shin rhetoric that would certainly have incensed believers, and that no doubt added fuel to the embers of the smoldering conflict.

Although I have been unable to locate a copy of the *Kōmori mōdanki*, Akamatsu (1943, pp. 80–82) gives lengthy excerpts from the text and a synopsis, so that the basic arguments can be reconstructed. According to the preface, the title (An account of the falacy of the bat) refers to a passage in the *Fo-ts'ang ching* 佛藏經 (Jpn. *Butsuzō-kyō*), explaining that monks who break the precepts can be compared to bats.[4] Bats take advantage of their resemblance to both birds and rats as it suits their purposes. When being hunted as a bird, the bat jumps into a hole in the ground like a rat; if it is then hunted as a rat, it flies in the air like a bird. By analogy, the *Kōmori mōdanki* explains, Shin monks resemble both monks and lay people. They wear black clerical robes and shave their heads like monks, but they marry and eat meat and are thus laymen (since it is by virtue of keeping the precepts that one truly becomes a monk). According to Akamatsu, the text makes five basic charges against Shin monks.

1 They do not understand the Buddha mind, so they preach delusion and cannot foster true faith within themselves or others.

2 They teach of worldly matters rather than Buddhist truth.

[4] See T #653, 15.788c. Akamatsu (1943, p. 80) identifies the source of the story about the bats as the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* 涅槃經, but I have been unable to locate it there. The *Shasekishū* (fasc. 4, part 1; Watanabe 1966, p. 178) makes a direct reference to the version in the *Fo-ts'ang ching*, associating it with a related term *chōsosō* 鳥鼠僧, a derogatory expression for individuals who take on only the outward trappings of a monk.

3 They break the precepts by drinking saké, eating meat and other forbidden foods, and having wives, and then defile the Three Treasures by wearing robes and entering temples like true monks.

4 They slander the virtuous, who keep the precepts, and praise themselves, who are without merit.

5 They do not understand the One Vehicle of the True Dharma, so they teach an expedient practice.

The Mori Incident

Tetsugen and Shin believers clashed a second time in Kyūshū several years later. All information related to the incident is based on Tetsugen's official affidavit (the *Mori no hōnan ni kansuru kōjōgaki* 森の法難に関する口上書, the text of which appears in MINAMOTO 1979, pp. 287–308) and subsequent correspondence addressed to Kurushima Michikiyo 久留島通清 (1629–1700), daimyō of Bungo 豊後 Province.[5]

Tetsugen returned to his native Kyūshū in 1674 to nurse his father through his final illness, and then remained for several years, probably to fulfill the filial obligations related to his father's death. During that period Tetsugen traveled the region, teaching at various temples and instructing government officials who extended invitations to him. In the winter of 1674, Kurushima, a long-time supporter of Ōbaku, invited Tetsugen to lecture in the castle town of Mori 森. Once again, Tetsugen repeated his sermons on the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* at the Kurushima family temple of Anraku-ji 安楽寺, starting at the beginning of the eleventh month.

Within a few days of the start of the lecture series a group of Shin believers from neighboring villages gathered to decide how best to respond to Tetsugen and his lectures. No doubt they were already familiar with the previous events in Edo, perhaps through Chikū's writings, and this time they were prepared to spring into action. A group first approached the regional administrator of temples and shrines, Ōbayashi Sebei 大林瀬兵衛, and demanded his permission to publicly debate with Tetsugen at Anraku-ji, contending that Tetsugen and Kengan Zen'etsu 賢巖禅悦 (1618–1690), a Zen master from Tafuku-ji 多福寺 in Bungo, were evil monks who regularly used the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* to slander the Shin sect. Tetsugen had at one time

[5] The letter Tetsugen later wrote to Lord Kurushima is known as *Kurushima kimi ni taisuru kyūmei konseisho* 久留島侯に対する救命懇請書 (MINAMOTO 1979, pp. 311–17).

practiced under Kengan, and had been introduced to the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* by him; in all likelihood, he also relied heavily on Kengan's interpretation to structure his own lectures. The administrator confirmed that Tetsugen was indeed reading the scripture, but denied their request to debate on the grounds that Tetsugen was not using it to attack the Shin sect.

Tensions did not abate within the Shin community after this initial rebuff; the protest spread and several Shin temples in the area became involved, including Senkō-ji 専光寺, Kōrin-ji 光林寺, and Kōtoku-ji 光徳寺 in the city of Mori, and Shōren-ji 照蓮寺 in the nearby town of Hita. The believers in Kyūshū contacted the main temple in Kyoto for support, and a subsequent request for permission to debate came directly from the sectarian headquarters at Nishi Hongan-ji. In his later affidavit Tetsugen quoted the administrator's reply:

> Dharma debates are prohibited by national law, so you may not hold one. Furthermore, I myself have been able to attend Tetsugen's sermons each day. To date I have not heard him disparage any sect at all. As he said, the [*Śūraṅgama*] Sūtra discusses such things as the "three absolutes," which are there for all ears to hear. Therefore, there is no reason to doubt Tetsugen. If there are matters in the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* about which you would like to ask, then you may go and ask him one by one. This is the etiquette for *mondō* in the Zen sect. If you will follow this procedure, even one thousand of you may question him. (Minamoto 1979, p. 293)

Tetsugen explained in the affidavit that the "three absolutes" 三決定 to which the administrator alludes includes keeping the precepts, especially those against killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct. Tetsugen maintained that these precepts are called absolute, because they govern the conduct of all monks regardless of sect. *Mondō* 問答 are verbal exchanges between a Zen master and an individual disciple, generally occurring within the formal context of monastic practice. While the term would not normally be used to describe a member of an audience challenging the speaker to debate, *mondō* sometimes involve confrontational questioning. Although the administrator under no account would grant permission for a formal Dharma debate, nor sanction a group onslaught against Tetsugen, he recommended *mondō* as an option befitting the context of a Zen temple.

The Shin protestors were not satisfied with this option, preferring to challenge Tetsugen en masse. By this time, a large number of believers had assembled at Kōtoku-ji, and they continued to press the administrator to accede to their demands. Finally, the protestors

threatened to take matters into their own hands, charge Anraku-ji, and seize Tetsugen by force. The administrator countered with threats of his own, which apparently did not deter the protestors. They responded,

> So many of our monks have flocked here from the Chikugo and Chikuzen vicinity and Hita, that each of your soldiers would have to kill five to eight of us. It costs us more than two *koku* of rice just to feed all of us for one night. You have expressed your opinion on these matters, but tonight a great throng will force its way [into Anraku-ji] without permission. And since we will not all fall at the hands of your soldiers, Tetsugen will finally be in our grasp.
>
> (MINAMOTO 1979, pp. 294–95)

Once the Shin protestors threatened to use force in this way, the administrator consulted with Tetsugen and the other monks at Anraku-ji. The provincial authorities took the threat of violence seriously, perhaps recalling earlier examples of violence involving Shin believers during the *ikkō ikki* 一向一揆 uprisings of the previous centuries.[6] The provincial officials suggested to Tetsugen and the others that they discontinue the lecture series and disperse the monks who had gathered at Anraku-ji to hear it. Although the Anraku-ji monks felt that the threat was not serious and the sermons could safely continue, Tetsugen acceded to the wishes of the authorities.

Tetsugen explained in his affidavit that he made this decision in order to avoid any inadvertent mishap. Since a crowd had actually gathered, there was a genuine risk of something happening. He believed that if he left, "things would probably quiet down naturally, like a fire going out when there is no more kindling" (MINAMOTO 1979, pp. 307–308). Tetsugen feared that even a small disturbance would inevitably involve the Tokugawa bakufu and would cause Lord Kurushima undue anxiety. Moreover, he believed that an angry exchange of words with the Shin believers would be inappropriate behavior for a Buddhist monk, especially one claiming to preach on the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra.*

> If, in spite of the fact that I was lecturing on the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra,* I were to make firm distinctions between self and other and argue strenuously over right and wrong, it would be like

6 *Ikkō ikki* uprisings began in the late fifteenth century and continued until Oda Nobunaga successfully asserted his military authority over the Shin sect. There are many studies of these uprisings, e.g., KASAHARA 1962 and 1970, and DAVIS 1974. MCMULLIN discusses Oda Nobunaga's campaign against his Shin opponents (1984, pp. 99–161).

> striking my mother's face with the *Book of Filial Piety*.[7]... If I did not swiftly withdraw, but instead insisted on fighting out of self-conceit, then it would be the same as confronting one delusion with another delusion, or fighting bubbles with bubbles. (MINAMOTO 1979, p. 305)

Tetsugen left before dawn on the twenty-seventh day of the eleventh month of 1674, without completing the lecture series he had begun less than a month before. In order to ensure his safety the provincial officials sent a military escort of ten soldiers with him as far as the coast—the first portion of the trip out of Mori was over difficult mountain terrain, and Kurushima's retainers wanted to take no risk of Tetsugen being kidnapped. From the port of Kashiranashi, he traveled by boat to Tsuruzaki accompanied by only two soldiers. Lord Hosokawa had a villa in Tsuruzaki where Tetsugen stayed for a time, probably composing his official statement for Lord Kurushima.[8] Tetsugen's disciples later maintained that some Shin believers actually tried to assassinate him while he was in Tsuruzaki. Although there is no historical evidence to confirm this, the story is that poison was put in Tetsugen's tea and bean cakes, causing an illness from which he never fully recovered. For this reason, it is said, his descendents never made offerings of tea and bean cakes before his image.

Soon after Tetsugen left Mori, the provincial authorities arrested and imprisoned two Shin monks whom they regarded as ringleaders of the incident. Punishment for disturbing the peace and inciting a riot would normally have been death, but the monks were saved by Tetsugen's intervention on their behalf. Tetsugen and Kurushima had been in contact by post in the weeks following the incident, and Tetsugen had learned of the arrest from Kurushima himself. Tetsugen wrote a letter in response to this news, asking that the monks be pardoned and their lives spared.

> [I appreciated] receiving your letters [sent] by messenger. I was overjoyed to learn in your letter that your province has grown more and more tranquil. The affairs of your humble monk remain unchanged. Last winter when you invited me to visit you [in Mori], some Ikkō monks said various things and so I was obliged to return to my home province. Afterwards, [the head monks from] Senkō-ji and Kōrin-ji were arrested

[7] *Hsiao ching* 孝經 (J. *Kōkyō*), a Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) text commonly attributed to Tseng Tzu 曾子, a disciple of Confucius. The text takes the form of a dialogue between Tseng Tzu and Confucius, and presents the view that filial piety is the basis of all morality.

[8] The affidavit as it appears in the secondary sources is not dated, so it is not completely clear exactly where or when Tetsugen composed it (AKAMATSU 1943, p. 97).

> and imprisoned. Their behavior was truly unreasonable, and it was understandable that you ordered [their arrest]. However, since what occurred at that time concerned the Dharma, and was distinct from worldly affairs, I would be still more grateful if you would pardon [the head monks of] the two temples and restore them to their former state.... Those [Shin] monks went as far as they did at that time because they did not realize that I was stating directly the admonitions of the Tathāgata. Therefore, the golden words of admonition were suddenly inverted in their ears. In the end, what should have been healing medicine was instead bitter to their tongues. They spread some rumors like ordinary folk or children would. As is often the case, when one dog howls to the heavens, ten thousand dogs pass the message along as true. Without fully grasping the root cause of the matter, a large crowd assembled. Though afterwards it seemed as though a crime had occurred, in the end no real harm was done.
>
> (MINAMOTO 1979, pp. 311–12, 314–15)

Tetsugen's compassion moved Kurushima, and in his reply of the sixteenth day of the first month, he agreed to abide by Tetsugen's wishes.[9] The Mori incident was thus resolved without any injury or subsequent penalties. There are no indications of any other direct encounters between Tetsugen and Shin believers.

Seed of the Conflict

From the above it is obvious that much of the conflict arose from Tetsugen's use of the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*, a text that played a crucial role in Tetsugen's life. At the time he first heard Kengan lecture on it in 1661, he had been experiencing a long period of doubt. From the time he left Shin in 1655 until 1661, Tetsugen seems to have wavered in his decision to practice Zen, perhaps weighing it against the Shin practice he had abandoned. Hearing Kengan read the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* constituted a decisive factor in his final commitment to Zen. Clearly, Tetsugen understood the sūtra to reject the Shin assertion that, in *mappō*, maintaining the precepts against marrying and eating meat constituted an expression of self-power and hence a hindrance to salvation. If, as seems likely, this was the issue causing his doubt, then the sūtra helped him put that doubt to rest and move ahead in his Zen practice.

9 The text of Kurushima's letter is given in YOSHINAGA 1942, pp. 72–73.

Scholars do not agree on whether or not Tetsugen intentionally used the sūtra to attack Shin in his lectures in Edo and Mori. WASHIO Junkei, uncritically accepting the Shin account of events, maintains that Tetsugen deliberately attacked Shin (1945, pp. 426–29); the Ōbaku scholar AKAMATSU Shinmyō argues the opposite extreme, that Tetsugen acted only out of compassion, never intending any attack (1943, pp. 67–68, 82, 92). MINAMOTO Ryōen suggests that Tetsugen demonstrated an eagerness to fight in the Edo encounter, but that he had matured by the time he was in Mori in 1674 and took a more appropriate attitude of restraint and compassion (1979, p. 143). In point of fact, we can only be certain that Shin believers *perceived* an attack—whether Tetsugen intentionally provoked the Shin believers or not is impossible to determine from the sources. We simply lack sufficient details on the exchange to judge even his words, much less his intentions. In any event, the description of Tetsugen's encounter with Kōsei suggests that Tetsugen, when challenged, overwhelmed his opponent with the force of his arguments. Tetsugen was known for his rhetorical skills, so it would be no surprise if he proved himself a formidable opponent in debate.

According to Tetsugen's own account of the second incident, the Shin believers misunderstood his intentions in lecturing on the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra.*

> When they heard I was reading this sort of thing, they thought I was slandering the Ikkō sect. On the contrary, I was not disparaging them in the least. This is simply the way the Buddha transmitted his precepts. (MINAMOTO 1979, p. 292)

Regardless of Tetsugen's attitude and intentions, the images and themes from the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* alone would have been enough to incense his opponents (MINAMOTO 1979, p. 129). From Tetsugen's description of his sermons included in his affidavit it is possible to judge just what themes proved most offensive to the Shin believers. Among them was the above-mentioned "three absolutes," which Tetsugen paid close attention to in his discussion of the sūtra [the "three absolutes" (*sanketsujō*) of Buddhist practice, namely, the precepts, meditation and wisdom (*śīla, dhyāna,* and *prajnā*)].[10]

> First of all, I lecture on what is called the Three Absolutes in the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra,* that is, what [the Buddha] explained

10 T 19.131c. "The Buddha said: 'Ananda, you have always heard me teach about discipline (*vinaya*), which consists in the practice of three decisive steps, the control of mind, called *śīla,* which leads to stillness (*dhyāna*) and thence to wisdom (*prajñā*). This is called the threefold study of the supramundane way" (LUK 1966, pp. 151–52).

> about the good and the evil of the False Dharma and the True Dharma in the Final Age. Practicing without keeping the precepts taught by the Buddha is the False Dharma. Therefore, although practices like the nenbutsu, zazen, and recitation of the sūtras are naturally undertaken differently depending on the ability of each believer, precepts against killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying are called "absolute" (*ketsujō* 決定) because no matter what one's sect, they are fixed and must be preserved. (MINAMOTO 1979, p. 288)

In the sections that follow, Tetsugen considered the consequences of breaking the precepts enumerated above. In doing so, Tetsugen's words parallel those found in the sūtra so closely that he did little more than render the original text in simple Japanese. Tetsugen is no more adamant nor definitive than the sūtra itself in stressing the necessity for keeping the precepts as the basis of Buddhist practice.

Following the fundamental approach of the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*, Tetsugen stressed the necessity for all Buddhists to keep the Buddhist precepts as the first step in their progress along the path to enlightenment. By doing so, he rejected, at least in principle, the general Pure Land belief that in the final age of the Dharma keeping the precepts had become impossible, even detrimental, to the believer.[11]

We do not know whether Tetsugen made explicit reference to Shin monastic practices in his lectures, or if he used the sūtra as the basis for a more general call for reform within the Buddhist monastic community. It was perhaps Tetsugen's identity as a former Shin believer more than anything else that led his opponents to see his sermons as direct attacks on their sect. Tetsugen had, it would seem, taken the words of the sūtra to heart in his own life; he left the one sect that encouraged married clergy and turned to Ōbaku Zen, which emphasized strict maintenance of the precepts.

Bitter Responses: A Pure Land Rejoinder

Tetsugen's preaching on the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* caused animosity within quarters of the Shin sect other than those mentioned above. For example, Gekkan 月感 (1600–1674), a priest from Kyūshū who had

11 According to Pure Land teachings in Japan, not only had the practice of Buddhist morality from earlier ages become impossible during the *mappō*, but it endangered the believer's salvation by Amida Buddha. This was because following the precepts implied a reliance on one's own ability rather than absolute reliance on the power of Amida's vow. See discussions of Shinran's teachings related to morality and self-power in UEDA and HIROTA (1989, pp. 152–63) and BLOOM (1985, pp. 42–44).

opposed Tetsugen's Shin master Saigin years earlier, likewise came to despise Tetsugen as a Zen master.[12] Gekkan longed to debate Tetsugen and refute the charges he had supposedly made against the Shin sect. Since Gekkan was old and frail nothing ever came of this desire, and Tetsugen himself probably never learned of it. Gekkan expressed his feelings to his disciples, however, and his biographer later described them in the *nenpu* entry for 1674, the final year of Gekkan's life.[13] The biographer, one of Gekkan's disciples, presents a strange, almost pitiful scene of a man consumed with anger to the very end of his days, but the story does reflect the depth of emotion that Tetsugen's teachings could provoke within Shin believers.

> [Gekkan's] letter arrived in Kyoto on the tenth day of the eighth month [of 1674]. It seems that he had taken up his brush to write because of his illness. His letter said: "At the present time, they say that Tetsugen has come down to Zenjō-ji and is lecturing on the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra.* That Dharma teacher [Tetsugen] was a disciple of Saigin and studied the teachings of our sect. However, he has forgotten the great debt of gratitude owed to our founder [Shinran] and has gone over to the Zen sect. When he reads the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra,* he slanders our sect's practice of marrying and eating meat, using the "three absolutes" [mentioned in it]. He has slandered the Ikkō sect in Osaka and Edo, and there has never been as evil a monk as he, past or present. He is the sworn enemy of the Shin sect. With each year that passes, I think about subduing and putting Tetsugen down. Right now I would like to take the gold chain I have in my hand, ram it into his mouth, and shut it for good. I have heard that there is a book called *Ryōgon hashaku* 楞嚴破釋 [circulating] in Kyoto, and that this book refutes the lectures of this Dharma teacher.[14] Please send a copy of it to me by express post. Take care to send it quickly as I instructed last year, and read it after my death. I am gravely ill and believe I will pass away soon, so please try to do as I asked."

12 Gekkan succeeded in having Saigin removed from office as director of the Shin seminary in Kyoto, charging him with corrupting the sect's teachings with Zen accretions. The incident required Bakufu intervention and resulted in Gekkan's banishment and the temporary closure of the seminary. See Ashikaga 1939, pp. 184–98.

13 According to Akamatsu (1943, 88), the full name of the biography was *Enju-ji kaiki Gekkan daitoku nenpu ryakuden* 延壽寺開基月感大徳年譜略傳, and it was written in 1674 shortly after Gekkan's death.

14 The *Ryōgon kōdan hashaku* 楞嚴講談破釋 is one of the texts attributed to Chikū in the *Sanjo zuihitsu.* Chikū wrote the book to refute Tetsugen's lectures on the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra,* although without mentioning Tetsugen by name (Akamatsu 1943, p. 82).

> After reading the letter, I [the biographer] searched in all the bookshops in Kyoto, but since it was published in Edo, there wasn't even one copy. I was also terribly ill and unable to go down to see him.... Meanwhile, [he died on the fifth day of the ninth month] and we gathered at the main temple to hold his memorial service on the twentieth day of the tenth month....
>
> Until his death the master thought about Tetsugen's wickedness and about his own desire to crush him. Day and night he never forgot his long-cherished goal of debating with Tetsugen. He therefore read the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* from beginning to end and searched through the scriptures at great length. He carefully researched the three types of demons that are mentioned in the section on the "three absolutes." He determined definitively that they all refer to the Zen monk's own line and never afflicted the Nenbutsu sect at all. He waited for a chance [to debate Tetsugen] when he came to his province, but [Tetsugen] never did.[15]
>
> (AKAMATSU 1943, pp. 88–90)

From the above, it would appear that Gekkan's hatred was motivated as much by Tetsugen's defection from the Shin sect as by his actual lectures, which Gekkan never heard in person (though he had no doubt heard accounts of Tetsugen's talks in Edo and Osaka). By the time Tetsugen returned to Kyūshū in 1674, Gekkan lay on his deathbed and could neither attend the lectures nor challenge Tetsugen to debate.

Gekkan's biographer appended a purported description of Tetsugen's own death. According to this account, Tetsugen was handing out amulets to protect believers from sickness during a terrible epidemic in the Osaka region. After handing out some ten thousand amulets over a period of three days at Tetsugen-ji 鉄眼寺 (officially known as Zuiryū-ji 瑞龍寺), Tetsugen himself fell ill with the fever. His disciples then held a service to pray for Tetsugen's recovery. When people learned the purpose of the service they scoffed at Tetsugen, who could not even protect himself from the fever. The account concludes,

> At that time, the Dharma teacher [Tetsugen]'s whole life was devoid of merit. This was his retribution for wickedly attacking the Shin sect and slandering it with his venomous words. Afterwards... I heard that Tetsugen died of the fever. How pitiful! It

15 The *Gekkan nenpu* entry for 1674 is quoted in several sources, including AKAMATSU (1943, pp. 88–90), YOSHINAGA (1942, pp. 55–57) and SHIMODA (1928, pp. 99–100). The quotations are all virtually identical, although Akamatsu provides a lengthier passage.

> is said that not knowing one's debt of gratitude is the seed of [falling into] avīci hell. His exceedingly violent death is truly a clear [example] of this Buddhist teaching.
>
> (AKAMATSU 1943, p. 89)

Although this story bears some resemblance to the actual circumstances of Tetsugen's death, there are significant problems with it. AKAMATSU, for example, rejects it as false, arguing that it was recorded in 1674, several years before Tetsugen's death (1943, p. 89). Tetsugen did die of a disease, probably contracted while working among the common people in Osaka during a famine, but he was lecturing and feeding the people at the time, not handing out amulets. Nevertheless, the story is important less for its historicity than for the insight it provides on the Shin attitude of contempt for Tetsugen.

One final example represents a more sophisticated Shin attempt to discredit Tetsugen, a Buddhist master widely respected for his high moral character. In the *San'yo zuihitsu*, Erin pointed out with some amusement that although Tetsugen criticized the Shin sect for breaking the basic precepts against monks marrying and eating meat, he himself was not above reproach when it came to upholding the precepts. In the course of producing and distributing his edition of the Tripitaka, Tetsugen opened a bookstore at his Zen temple and squabbled over the profits. Since, Erin said, he could not possibly have avoided breaking the precept against monks handling money, his criticism of Shin was rather like the pot calling the kettle black. Erin concluded that Tetsugen's greatest error was in failing to properly grasp and explain the Shin understanding of Buddhist practice in the three ages of the Dharma (AKAMATSU 1943, pp. 75–76).

Conclusions

As exemplified by the Mori incident, the Shin sect did not follow a policy of constraint in dealing with its perceived enemies, even under the implicit threat of bakufu sanction. Indeed, Shin's handling of its conflicts with Tetsugen stands in marked contrast to Rinzai's restraint in the face of what appears to have been a greater threat. While Rinzai and Ōbaku kept a polite distance in the public realm and thus never precipitated government intervention in their disputes, the Shin believers in both the Edo and Kyūshū incidents actively sought public confrontation with Tetsugen, making bakufu involvement almost inevitable. The differences in conflict management styles may be explainable in part by the fact that Rinzai and Ōbaku effectively handled their conflicts at the institutional level, while the Shin conflict

with Tetsugen remained on a more personal level; perhaps conflicts of the latter type engender deeper emotional responses, which can be much more difficult to control. One may also observe that, as in the earlier *ikkō ikki* uprisings, the Shin sect had an established pattern of resolving conflict through the use of sheer numbers and physical force. The Zen sects in Japan rarely, if ever, made use of such means, whether because of their close ties to military governments, their inability to elicit such heartfelt popular support, or, as they themselves maintain, because of their deeper dedication to the Buddhist principle of non-injury.

In other respects, however, the Shin response to Tetsugen in particular was not entirely different from the Rinzai reaction to Ōbaku as a whole. In both cases, masters who perceived a threat to their own sect penned ad hominem attacks intended to reduce the stature of the offending Ōbaku masters, focusing special attention on the more prominent Japanese converts, seen as traitors to their original communities. These anti-Ōbaku texts can also be seen to turn their negative rhetoric to positive use: by first defining the offending Other, they could then structure their own vision of the true practice or teachings—whether of Zen or of Shin—in opposition to this Other. For these purposes it is of little consequence whether Shin was explicitly attacked by Tetsugen or not, or whether the Rinzai portraits of Ōbaku teachings were historically accurate or not. For the Shin sect, opposition to Tetsugen served as an emotional rallying point for ordinary believers to reaffirm their commitment to the faith, just as it provided the clergy with a timely opportunity to restate Shin interpretations of the scriptures by debunking his purported views. Conflicts with Ōbaku thus served as a means to restate, and sometimes to reform, teachings within other Japanese Buddhist sects.

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