

## Teaching Assemblies and Lay Societies in the Formation of Modern Sectarian Buddhism

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*This study surveys the emergence of teaching assemblies and lay societies in the Meiji era. These small organizations played a decisive role in the formation of modern sectarian institutions, before the various sectarian prescriptions and temple rules were established. These groups mediated between the clergy and laity and fostered a debate on sectarian identity with eloquent responses to the growing hegemony of head temples. Rapid development of the teaching assemblies and lay societies during a period when the relationship between religion and the state was tense also illustrates the fact that groups of like-minded people were seeking new ways to express their beliefs outside the confines of sectarian Buddhism. By using original documents this article shows the evolution of the Zen denominations within the larger context of the legal framework that shaped all Buddhist denominations, and depicts how the divisions between sects and branches were reshuffled several times before stabilizing in their present form.*

IN THE EARLY MEIJI PERIOD the rebuilding of Buddhism was an urgent task, impelled by the collapse of the Bakufu's temple registration system and by such subsequent Meiji era developments as the anti-Buddhist *haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈 movement and the official separation of Shinto and Buddhism. Buddhist teaching assemblies (*kyōkai* 教会) and lay societies (*kessha* 結社) that were formed during this time played a leading role in establishing the structure of the modern Buddhist institutional system.

\* This essay is a translation of "Kindai shūha bukkō no seiritsu to kyōkai/kessha no shosō" 近代宗派仏教の成立と教会・結社の諸相, *Matsugaoka bunko kenkyū nenpō* 松ヶ岡文庫研究年報 10 (1996): 99-128. Translated with the permission of Prof. Furuta Shōkin 古田紹欽, chief editor of *Matsugaoka bunko kenkyū nenpō*. The translator, Clark Chilson, would like to thank Watanabe Manabu for his assistance with translating the original documents quoted in the essay, and Michel Mohr for thoroughly going over the translation and providing the translator's notes.

The terms *kyōkai* and *kessha* were used in the *Kyōkai taii* 教会大意 [General guidelines for teaching assemblies], a ten-article document distributed in a special notification by the Ministry of Doctrine on 24 August 1873 (MKR 1968, p. 833).<sup>1</sup> This notification justified in particular the system of teaching academies and doctrinal instructors (*kyōin kyōdō taisai* 教院教導体制) aimed at promoting Shinto as the national doctrine (*shintō kokkyōka* 神道国教化). Although *kyōkai* was initially a legal term used by the government in the context of its religious policy, at some point it aroused the interest of Buddhist teachers belonging to the different sects. When Shinto and Buddhism were being taught together at the teaching academies, these sectarian Buddhist teachers started using the word *kyōkai* in reference to a passage of another notification specifying that “as has been repeatedly required, all concerned authorities must be notified whenever believers come together to form societies or assemblies (*sha kai o musubu* 社会ヲ結ブ).”<sup>2</sup> This memorandum was issued by the Ministry of Doctrine in reply to the “application for authorization to set up the Great Teaching Academy” (Daikyōin 大教院) in Tokyo that was drafted by Buddhist leaders.

Although the word *kyōkai*, which evokes the image of Christian churches, sounded and still sounds unfamiliar to Buddhists, *kessha* was intuitively understood. It resembles *kōsha* 講社, the term associated with lay groups sharing the same popular beliefs, which have existed in Japan since ancient times.<sup>3</sup> The basic models for characterizing the formation of modern sectarian Buddhism were the traditional schools (*shūmon* 宗門) that were divided into sects and branches. The priests yearned for a new type of institution they called *kyōkai*, while the general public longed for the old popular *kōsha* type of organization, represented by the *kessha*. The question at the time, therefore, was whether an institution could integrate both tendencies to unite the clergy and laity.

The development of the *kyōkai* and *kessha* is a topic that scholars

<sup>1</sup> *Meiji rokunen hachigatsu nijūyokka Kyōbushō bangai tatsu* 明治6年8月24日教部省番外達.

<sup>2</sup> *Kyōbushō tsutatsu daiyōgō* 教部省通達第4号. Translator’s note: In this passage the characters *sha* and *kai* still seem to be used as separate terms grouped together. The compound *shakai* 社会 was inaugurated as the translation for the English word “society” in 1875, including its whole range of meanings. The journalist and translator Fukuchi Gen’ichirō 福地源一郎 (1841–1906) is credited with this choice of a term that already appeared in the Chinese Song anthology *Jinsilu* 近思錄. See SHŌGAKU TOSHŌ, p. 1199c.

<sup>3</sup> Translator’s note: the terms *kō* 講, *kōsha* or *kōja* 講社, and *kōjū* 講中 often designate groups of believers who gather to make a pilgrimage or visit to a temple or sanctuary, or join their resources to make donations to a specific religious institution. These groups, which can be rendered as “confraternities,” should be distinguished from the Buddhist gatherings, also known as *kō* 講 or *kōe* 講會, at which a lecture is given on a particular text. See SHŌGAKU TOSHŌ, p. 850d.

have only recently started to investigate. In order to understand the basic issues involved it is necessary to explore the primary documents related to these two types of organizations. We also need to clarify the larger context through a historical examination of the beliefs common to these organizations, the early modern religious confraternities known as *kō* 講, and the nonmonastic participants in Zen ceremonies (*jukaie* 授戒会). Unfortunately, many of the related documents, particularly those associated with the Tendai, Shingon, and Nichiren sects, remain hidden away in temple repositories, and will require a considerable effort to bring to light.

*The Formation of Modern Sectarian Organizations  
and the Emergence of Teaching Assemblies and Lay Societies*

Most historical analyses of early Meiji Buddhism leave the impression that the *haibutsu kishaku* movement and the separation of Shinto and Buddhism were the most important developments of the period. And indeed, research on Meiji Buddhism must begin with these two traumatic events. But it must not be overlooked that these events promoted the rise of modern sectarian organizations, a development that illustrates the capacity of Buddhism to survive under adverse conditions.

Hence any analysis of the teaching assemblies and lay societies must take into consideration their intimate connection with the twelve Buddhist sects and the thirty-seven independent branches that were taking form during this period, a time when the relationship between religion and the state was tense. For these sects and branches the sectarian prescriptions (*shūsei* 宗制) and temple rules (*jihō* 寺法) were of great importance in that they situated the groups within the modern legal framework. However, the various *kyōkai kessha jōrei* [regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies], which were approved by the Meiji Government prior to the sectarian prescriptions and temple rules, played an even greater role in laying the foundation for modern Buddhist sectarian institutions.

The Meiji Government decided, following its dismantling of the Bakufu's domain system, to recognize the respective sects and branches contingent upon their nomination of a "chief abbot of doctrinal instructors" (*kyōdōshoku kanchō* 教導職管長). This was announced in the sixth month of 1872 when the Ministry of Doctrine sent the following notice to each prefectural office:

Every temple in each jurisdiction must be notified, in accordance with the stipulations provided on the attached sheet, of the fact that hereafter each sect will have one chief doctrinal

instructor, [a measure taken] for the purpose of regulating the respective sects and branches.

(*Kyōbushō tatsu daiyongō* 教部省達第4号)

Early modern Buddhism saw the rise of the so-called “twelve modern Buddhist sects”—Tendai, Shingon, Jōdo, Rinzai, Sōtō, Ōbaku, Shin, Nichiren, Ji, Yūzū Nenbutsu, Hossō, and Kegon—only after the Meiji era abolition of the *bakuhān* system and when the Ministry of Doctrine promulgated its various regulations. At the first stage, in 1872, there were only seven sects recognized by the government, but in the course of the next several years this number was gradually increased to the final twelve. Thus in 1872 the ministry joined the three Zen sects—Rinzai, Sōtō, and Ōbaku—into a single organization headed by one chief abbot. On 22 February 1874 it reversed this policy, disbanding the new, unified “Zen sect” and allowing the Rinzai and Sōtō organizations to register separately. Only then did the Rinzai and Sōtō traditions appoint their own chief abbot and reorganize themselves into modern sectarian institutions.

On 2 December 1874 the Ministry of Doctrine issued regulations that recognized Yūzū Nenbutsu as an independent sect, but at the same time reconfirmed Ōbaku’s subordinate status by placing it under Rinzai: “Rinzai, Sōtō, and Ōbaku were originally combined into a single sect, but Rinzai and Sōtō now will have separate branches, while Ōbaku is to be affiliated with Rinzai” (*Kyōbushō futatsu dainigō* 教部省布達第2号. MKR 1968, p. 833). Two years later, however, in February 1876, Ōbaku was recognized as an independent sect and was allowed to use the name associated with its original tradition, Ōbakushū. With this the twelve sects had all won official recognition and commenced their development as modern institutions.

In March 1874 the Ministry of Doctrine changed its original policy concerning the chief abbot, issuing the following regulations:

The Ministry of Doctrine earlier stipulated that one chief abbot of doctrinal instructors was to be appointed for each sect, but, for the sake of efficiency in managing their followers, the respective branches may now also designate a chief abbot. Make notification of this after appropriate individuals have been chosen.

(*Kyōbushō tatsusho otsu daisangō* 教部省達書乙第3号;  
MKR 1968, p. 834)

This represented quite an expansion of the ministry’s original plan in that it allowed the branches within the various sects the right to appoint *kanchō* of their own, in effect recognizing their independence. What the government was aiming for is not clear. It could be

that the ministry was very well informed about the internal situation within the various schools and acknowledged the branches' right to become independent, or it could be that it was trying to dilute the power and authority of the larger sects by letting them break up into smaller autonomous groups. In any case, the new policy provided Meiji Buddhism with the opportunity to reorganize its sectarian structure.

In point of fact, the formation and appellation of the modern Buddhist sects became possible only with the Ministry of Doctrine's establishment of the *kanchō* post and the reaffirmation of this policy by the Ministry of Home Affairs. This process also permitted the branches to become equal to the sects with which they had originally been affiliated. Indeed, in certain cases the original parent sect lost all viability as an organizational entity, and subdivided into collections of independent branches. A typical example is the Rinzai sect, which in 1876 was authorized to split up into a number of subdivisions—the Tenryūji 天龍寺, Shōkokuji 相国寺, Kenninji 建仁寺, Nanzenji 南禅寺, Myōshinji 妙心寺, Kenchōji 建長寺, Tōfukuji 東福寺, Daitokuji 大徳寺, and Engakuji 円覚寺 branches—each possessing its own chief abbot.

The case of Shinshū resembled that of Rinzai. The regulations for the religious assemblies of the Shin sect (*Shinshū shūkyō kessha jōrei* 真宗宗教結社条例) issued in 1876 attempted to create an artificially integrated unique Shin sect, but the resulting entity never functioned as a meaningful organization. The one exception was the Bukkōji 仏光寺 branch, which had been allowed its own chief abbot from the beginning of the Restoration era. It was not long before the other denominations also asserted their own independence. On 17 April 1877 the Honganji 本願寺, Higashi 東 (renamed Ōtani 大谷 branch in June 1881), Takada 高田, Kōshō 興正, and Kibe 木辺 branches were each granted their independence and permitted to appoint a chief abbot, as were the Izumoji 出雲寺, Yamamoto 山元, Jōshōji 誠照寺, and other branches the following year. In 1878 the Sanmonto 三門徒 branch split from the Higashi branch and was given independent status by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MKR 1968, p. 1073).

This indicates that the formation of teaching assemblies (*kyōkai*) and lay societies (*kessha*) began in the period that coincided with the reorganization of institutional structures within each sect between 1876 and 1877. Teaching assemblies and lay societies emerged as the smallest organizational elements preserving the popular faith that supported the foundations of the twelve sects and thirty-seven branches.

The reorganization of the sects and branches involved a fair amount of infighting between rival factions. These conflicts frequently resulted in the breakaway, dissolution, or amalgamation of various

groups, as when the Kōshō branch of Shinshū separated from the Honganji branch—a concrete example of the religious strife the government engendered with its policy of allowing the appointment of chief abbots not only by each single sect but also by individual branches. One aspect of the reorganization of the sects was that it served the interests of the government, which wanted to put even the emerging independent branches under the supervision of a chief abbot. In certain groups (such as the Sōtō sect), however, the factional infighting can be seen as part of the painful process of creating a modern religious organization while skillfully fending off schisms.

Paradoxically, at a time when all Buddhist organizations were coping with instability, the formation of teaching assemblies and lay societies was intimately related to movements seeking the status of an “independent sect.” These movements attempted to restrict the disintegration of authority that would accompany institutional reorganization and subsequent schisms. The Sōtō sect is a typical example of a sect that managed to reorganize itself with a minimal loss of vigor, as is evident by the fact that it was able to appoint a chief abbot by 1874, earlier than any other sect. Other examples were the Shingon and Jōdo sects, neither of which had to deal with strong internal movements seeking independence as separate branches.

This connection is reflected in the regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies of the Shin sect (*Shinshū kyōkai kessha* 真宗教会結社), which were enacted relatively early in March of 1876. These regulations applied to teaching assemblies and lay societies belonging to the above-mentioned amalgamation of the four disparate Shin traditions, the Honganji, Higashi, Senju 専修 (renamed Takada in November 1881), and Kibe branches. Although there is no evidence that this ruling was ever revised or abolished, it lost all relevance after 1877 owing to the split of the branches and the passage within the independent branches themselves of individual regulations and bylaws.

The Nichiren sect (formerly known as the Itchi 一致 branch) succeeded in establishing a relatively stable base; it was permitted to appoint a chief abbot for each of its branches and for the five subdivisions of the Shōretsu 勝劣 branch. Thus Nichirenshū, despite separation into a number of factions, was able to negotiate the process of restructuring without an extreme loss of sectarian vitality.

In the period from the late 1870s to the early 1880s, when the teaching assemblies and lay societies were at the height of their growth, significant changes took place in the relationship between religion and the state. One important reform was the abolition of the position of doctrinal instructor in August 1884 (*Dajōkan futatsu dai-*

*jūkyū gō* 太政官布達第19号), which resulted in the disappearance of the chief abbot's role as "chief doctrinal instructor." Although the chief abbot's post itself was not abolished, it changed markedly in character. Whereas previously the chief abbot was a public official associated with the former Ministry of Doctrine, he was now recast—in line with the government's newly declared policy of the separation of state and religion—as the chief administrator, empowered with full authority over the sect or branch to which he belonged. On the other hand, although it seems as if the status of chief abbot had radically changed, a closer look reveals that these high-ranking clerics retained the status of semigovernment officials. According to the Council of State notification number 68 (August 1885), "the treatment of the position (*mibun* 身分) of chief abbots will accord with that of other imperially appointed officials (*chokuninkan* 勅任官)." This new status also indicated that government oversight of Buddhism was diminishing and that the time for using Buddhist priests as instructors was now over. The role and jurisdiction of the new chief abbots were prescribed as follows:

Effective immediately all posts for Shinto and Buddhist doctrinal instructors will be abolished. Decisions regarding the appointment of temple priests (*jūshoku* 住職) as well as the ranking of teachers (*kyōshi* 教師) will be entrusted to the chief abbots [of each sect and branch], subject to the stipulation noted below. (Abbreviation of articles 1, 2, and 3)

Article 4: Chief abbots must obtain authorization from the minister of Home Affairs after deciding on the following provisions, in accordance with the principles professed in their own schools (*rikkyō kaishū no shugi* 立教開宗ノ主義).

(MKR 1968, p. 70)

The important "provisions" (*jōki* 条規) that needed to be authorized were "sect prescriptions," "temple rules," and "the status of teachers and their titles," plus the above-mentioned "appointment of temple priests and ranking of teachers."

These ministerial regulations, in accordance with the principle of separation of religion and state, recognized for the first time—more than ten years after the Restoration—the existence of Buddhist institutions led by chief abbots. From this time the chief abbot represented his sect or branch and was completely responsible to the authorities for it. The manner in which the chief abbot was chosen differed for each Buddhist sect or branch. Some used a simple system of rotation among the sect's abbots, and others applied a system in which the designated abbot of the sect's head temple (*honzan* 本山) would concurrently become chief abbot. The Shin sect used a system

based on hereditary succession, while the general assembly of the Sōtō sect elected, in turn, a chief abbot from the abbots of the sect's two head temples.

*The Pioneering Activities of Teaching Assemblies and Lay Societies*

Historians have given us the impression that the Shin sect, particularly the factions from the Higashi and Nishi Honganji, played a leading role in the development of modern Buddhism. With regard to the formation of the teaching assemblies and lay societies, however, we find it was those sects and branches that obtained independent status that were the quickest to act.

An example of an early document expressing a sect's intention to form teaching assemblies and lay societies is the *Kyōdōshoku suchiryaku* 教導職須知略 [Essentials of what must be known by doctrinal instructors], a notice published by the two Sōtō sect head temples, Eihei-ji and Sōji-ji, on 7 July 1872 (Meiji 5/6/2) (SFZ 1872, p. 2). This notice was issued at a time when there was almost no interest in *kyōkai* or *kessha* among other Buddhist groups. The eleven articles in the document present directions for the sect's doctrinal instructors who were on traveling duties to preach and inspect fellow clerics. The tenor of these directions can be summarized by the following six points:

- 1) Full assimilation of the ideal of *bunmei kaika* 文明開化 (civilization and enlightenment) is advocated:

Proceed first to explain the developments of the times, having recourse to the universal laws that apply to all nations of the world. Make the people understand the [present] situation and destroy their deepest prejudices.

- 2) Sōtō sect teachers are directed to view other religions from the perspective of freedom of religious belief:

Instructors must not use terms such as “evil teaching,” “superstition” or “Christian lord of heaven” [when talking about other teachings or] slander them in any way. This is the most important prohibition for instructors. There are many different teachings (*kyōhō* 教法) in the world and it is only natural that we affirm the teachings of our own country (*waga kokkyō* 吾が国教) and denounce that of other countries.... Furthermore, forceful attempts to exclude the teachings of others not only wastes effort but might also prevent our own teachings from being disseminated [in foreign countries]. This is the cardinal principle to keep in mind:



never speak ill of non-Buddhist teachings (*gekyō* 外教).  
(SFZ 1872, p. 3)

The Shin sect's rejection of Christianity (*haiyaron* 排耶論) as an "evil teaching" (*jakyō* 邪教) has been considered representative of the Buddhist position as a whole. We can see, however, that the view of Christianity in the Sōtō sect was quite different.

The remaining four points address the issue of how Zen priests are to preach to the laity. They illustrate the importance of spiritual edification and enlightenment for nonmonastics which up to this point had been largely neglected in the Sōtō institutional system.

- 3) This third point concentrates on the methods used for preaching and alludes to the Buddhist lay societies:

The fundamental [teaching] of our sect is to support the human heart. It is thus important that you not simply admonish your listeners concerning matters of which they are ignorant, but that you take due account of the situation of the locality in which they live and tailor your lectures to suit their capacity for understanding. You may utilize simple, familiar examples or raise high principles, but in any event it has to be appropriate [to the circumstances]. Do not preach the same thing indiscriminately to everyone.

When constituting a teaching society (*kyōsha* 教社) and giving lectures, it is imperative to consult beforehand with local government officials regarding potentially inconvenient matters.<sup>4</sup>  
(SFZ 1872, p. 3)

The above emphasizes the necessity for teachers to maintain a gentle attitude, but it is also clear that they were entrusted with the important mission of investigating the prevailing situation of the areas in which they preached; the data they collected during these trips resulted in the "Sōtō Sect Regulations for Teaching Assemblies" published in 1876.

- 4) Priests on teaching tours are advised on how to associate with people outside the sect and are warned to use caution:

When dealing with local government officials or people professing other Buddhist or non-Buddhist teachings (*tashū gekyō* 他宗外教) you should use prudence in your speech and refrain, even if challenged, from comparing [your beliefs with those of others]. If the other party forces you into a position where doctrinal debate is unavoidable, give a clear

<sup>4</sup> This passage contains here an additional note specifying that "the Sōtō sect regulations for teaching assemblies (*Sōtōshū kyōkai jōrei* 曹洞宗教会条例) was issued in 1876."

account of the fundamental intent of our teaching (*shūgi no honbun* 宗義ノ本文) and do not disgrace the Buddha and the patriarchs [by engaging in vain disputations]. (SFZ 1872, p. 3)

- 5) The importance of honoring morality and observing the precepts is stressed:

The Buddhist precepts are not the laws of the secular world. Since medieval times the precepts have become confused with the laws of the rulers (*ōhō* 王法), leading to a situation in which those who violate the precepts are punished in public courts of law. Today it is right and proper that the public authorities leave the handling of the Buddhist precepts and their observance or non-observance to the discretion of the Buddhists themselves. However, if the rules adopted by the respective sections [of our school] are not strictly enforced it will become difficult to promote our teachings. (SFZ 1872, p. 3)

- 6) A pioneering view of sectarian education is displayed:

Since the tenets of the Japanese empire are based on the teachings of the kami and buddhas, Shinto and Buddhist clerics and other concerned people should join forces and stand up together to build the Great Teaching Academy and to establish smaller academies throughout all the prefectures. They should also settle the question of how to train capable people and raise money. (SFZ 1872, p. 3)

The above excerpts from the *Kyōdōshoku suchiryaku* indicate that the leaders of the Sōtō sect were seeking in the teaching assemblies and lay societies some basic and small organizational elements for managing their institution. The document reveals the sect's deepened concern for creating a proselytizing religious order with a firm methodology for preaching to the laity, based on the data gathered by the traveling instructors.

Another point to note is how the Sōtō sect obtained information on the formation of lay societies in 1872 (when this document was published), earlier than the other sects. Lack of data prevents us from fully understanding the process by which the sect's proselytizing system was prepared. What we do know is that in 1876 Sōtō, having been recognized by the government as an independent sect, embarked on a vigorous program to establish lay societies and published its regulations for teaching assemblies (*Sōtōshū kyōkai jōrei*), until over 110 were established.

After the dissolution of the joint Shinto and Buddhist Great Teaching Academy in April 1875, the sects that sought authorization for

their teaching assemblies and lay societies were usually granted it by the Ministry of Doctrine before the end of the following year, or in some cases, as early as December of 1875.

For the Nichiren sect, however, no documents that relate to regulations for Nichiren teaching assemblies and lay societies can be found. We can nevertheless examine the *Myōhōkō shōjō kessha kisoku* 妙法講清淨結社規則 [Rules of the confraternity of the Lotus Sūtra and Purity Lay Society] that were authorized by the Ministry of Doctrine on 23 May 1874.

In March of 1874, Arai Nissatsu 新居日薩 (1830–1888), chief abbot of the Itchi branch of the Nichiren sect, received authorization from the Ministry of Doctrine for the above-mentioned “Rules.” Articles 1–4 and article 6 are missing, but I would like to examine some of its distinct characteristics as seen in article 5 and articles 7–10.

Article 5: Every morning reverential worship (*kyōhai* 敬拜) must be offered first to the Great Goddess Amaterasu, then to the altars enshrining ancestral deities (*sōbyō no jingi* 宗廟ノ神祇) and to the emperor. One must also worship the kami and buddha in which one believes, as well as one’s ancestors and one’s parents....

Article 7: Since hearing the doctrine is the basis for cultivating our progress, every day at a set time a teacher must be asked to give a sermon. However, since it is important to practice in a peaceful state of mind you must not thoughtlessly start disputes, nor carelessly praise yourself while rejecting others....

Article 9: The founder of our school, the great bodhisattva [Nichiren], set up our sect on [the idea of] establishing righteousness to secure the peace of the land (*rishhō ankoku* 立正安国) and he based its meaning on [the idea that] each situation coincides with marvelous [suchness] (*tōi sokumyō* 当位即妙). Through our single-minded recitation of the title of the *Lotus Sutra* (*shōdai* 唱題) we must mutually reinforce our faith, say prayers for the safety of the nation (*kokka anzen* 国家安全), and yearn for true peace (*yo no annon* 世ノ安穩) [to appear] in the present age and in the future (*gentō* 現当).

Article 10: No member of our confraternity (*kōsha* 講社) should be attached to money or food, and we must be content with our own lot. If all use their goodwill to spare the tiniest bit of excess earnings, this will not only allow our society to be saved from poverty or starvation but it could also be allocated to meet the expenses of the teaching assembly (*kyōkai*) or [dis-titute] members (*kyōin* 教員). (MKK 1981, p. 38)

The structure of these rules is cleverly balanced. It takes into account possible oppression by the government first by stipulating the worship of Amaterasu and the ancestral deities (related to the imperial family). At the end it appends a written oath with a promise to abide by the Three Standards of Instruction (*sanjō no kyōsoku* 三条ノ教則). In the middle of the text it boldly expresses the Nichiren doctrine of establishing righteousness to secure the peace of the land; concurrently the text ostensibly encourages charitable works, a statement intended to make the reader feel that Buddhism is beneficial for the nation (*buppō kokueki* 仏法益). These rules reflect the perspicacity of Arai Nissatsu's thought during this turbulent time, and are in sharp contrast with the *Kyōdōshoku suchiryaku* of Sōtō, which show a tolerance toward Christianity and an emphasis on internalizing "civilization," while adroitly avoiding the Three Standards of Instruction and focusing on preaching to the laity.

Arai Nissatsu was able to avoid friction with the state because he ran his religious order in a way that hid the coercive part of the Nichiren doctrine that advocates the subjugation of evil (*shakubuku* 折伏) and instead emphasized its counterpart, the attitude of acceptance (*shōju* 撰受). Arai had studied at Jūkōen 充洽園, a private school directed by Nichiki Udana 日輝優陀那 (1800–1859), and became one of the representative successors of Nichiki's "pliant interpretation" of the Nichiren teachings. In 1875 Arai Nissatsu published a revised edition of Nichiki's work, the *Myōkyō jōfugyō bon shūgi myōshō* 妙經常不輕品宗義名鈔 [Essentials of the doctrine in the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*].<sup>5</sup> The preface to this work says

This chapter exposes how a bodhisattva [inspired by] the teaching method of the original Buddha (*honke no dōshi* 本化ノ導師) [resorts to] a reverse teaching method (*gyakuke* 逆化). It presents the merits and the blessings [gained by] the founder of our school, the great bodhisattva [Nichiren], before and after [he was exiled to] the island of Sado. You should learn about this by reading the text. While exposing the reverse teaching method this work hides the method of subjugating [evil] and does not mention it. The intention is similar to [the one expressed in] the verses of the Exhortation to Hold Firm [Thirteenth] chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*.<sup>6</sup> By tak-

<sup>5</sup> The wood-block edition has the publisher's name as *Ikegami Nankoku gakushitsuzō han* 池上南谷学室蔵版.

<sup>6</sup> Translator's note: This chapter describes how to behave during the dark age of fear and evil and exhorts the believer to preserve (*kanji* 勸持) the Buddhist teachings by means of perseverance. See the translation by WATSON 1993, pp. 193–95.

ing [the example of the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging] and his bowing [to everybody] or praising [whatever person he met] this demonstrates the reverse teaching method.

In the main text, next to the section on “the method of subjugating evil,” we are struck by a small manuscript annotation saying “the approach [showing] acceptance” (*shōju* 撰受門). Although the Restoration period was certainly a time when the Nichiren doctrine would have considered it legitimate to subjugate evil by the use of coercive teaching methods, the above “Rules of the Confraternity of the *Lotus Sutra* and Purity Lay Society” presumably were composed by Arai Nisatsu on the basis of his conception that followers should be ready to “hide the method of subjugating [the evil] and not mention it.”

These rules, which were remarkably tolerant in their emphasis on the approach of showing acceptance, demonstrated their potential by becoming a powerful force for the establishment of lay societies. According to the *Kyōkai kessha ichiran* 教会結社一覽 [Synopsis of teaching assemblies and lay societies] originally published by Eirakudō 永樂堂, the number of Nichiren confraternities in 1876 numbered 182 in Tokyo alone. Among the various lay societies that were established under the name “Confraternity of the *Lotus Sutra* Lay Society” throughout the Kantō area, each of them took the general name Myōhōkō 妙法講 while adopting another name associated with a particular aspect of Nichiren’s doctrine (SHIMIZU 1937).

Later in June 1881, the Nichiren sect enacted the *Shōjō kessha kisoku* 清淨結社規則 [The rules of the Purity Lay Society], subsequent to “The Rules of the Confraternity of the *Lotus Sutra*,” and promulgated them from their headquarters at the Great Teaching Academy. In the appendix to these rules Arai writes:

Sermons (*sekkyō* 説教) are to be given precedence over all the other promotional activities in which the Myōhō Confraternity is involved. We should improve our confraternity in this way. You must methodically discuss the immediate necessity of promoting sermons....

According to a recent investigation of the situation, there is currently a total of approximately 75,000 temples, among which no more than 3,600 are affiliated with our sect. Even if we included small branch temples there would be no more than 5,000.... If our sect has been able to maintain its reputation, even though the number of our temples is no more than 5,000 of the 75,000, it is only so thanks to the popularity of the sermons based on the teachings left by our founder.... Our confraternity has been damaged because faith has gradually

weakened and because our doctrines have withered day after day. If we examine why this has happened we will realize that the believers and the confraternities cannot [be blamed for] these shortcomings, but that it is due to clerics (*sōryo* 僧侶) who strayed from the path.<sup>7</sup>

This passage depicts Arai, who was then chief abbot of doctrinal instructors, pouring his energy into starting lay societies based on faith and into the making of organizations to foster the faith of believers as a practical way to administer his school. We can infer that most leaders of the different sects, like Arai, had perceived that the setting up of lay societies based on faith was an urgent task that might support the management of their own institutions. The formation of teaching assemblies and lay societies showed remarkable progress among the twelve sects, especially in those huge organizations that had many branch temples (Sōtō with over 14,000 temples; Shingon with over 12,900 temples; Jōdo with over 8,300 temples) and also among sects that had a strong sense of crisis concerning the management of their institution, such as the Nichiren sect with over 4,900 temples.

Arai enacted his *Myōhōkō shōjō kessha kisoku* 妙法講清淨結社規則 to stop the decline of the smaller and weaker Nichiren institution and appealed to the branch temples to understand its spirit. Here I quote only the key points of the document.

Although there are many issues related to the improvement of our confraternity, the most urgent task for disseminating our teachings (*fukyō* 布教) is the promotion of sermons. We must unite to form a confraternity for giving sermons. The most urgent task is to begin establishing its rules. Accordingly, I propose to set up the following rules.

Section one: The formation of this lay society

Article 1: Our objective is to promote new support for our school and to protect the Dharma for the patrons who preserve and sustain the dissemination of our teachings. For this, we take as a source of inspiration the words contained in a prayer by the founder of our school, the great bodhisattva [Nichiren]: “Inside there are wise disciples who understand Buddhism and comprehend its profound teachings; outside there are pure patrons who [enable] Buddhism [to maintain] its enduring integrity.” The name of our society, Myōhōkō

<sup>7</sup> “Shōjō kessha kisoku narabini in” 清淨結社規則并引. In *Meikyō shinshi* 明教新誌 1311, 14 April 1882.

Shōjō Kessha [Confraternity of the *Lotus Sutra* and Purity Lay Society], comes from this wise saying.

Section two: Keeping the audience in mind.

Article 16: To help [the listeners] in their belief and understanding, you should explain as much as possible the reading of verses or texts in classical Chinese by giving their Japanese rendering. You should be able to recite by heart the most important passages from the works written by our founder.

Article 18: The basic goal of all members is to actively show compassion and to be kind to those we meet. We must strive to do compassionate acts, such as releasing animals from bondage, giving to the poor, and running to help those in trouble. There must be intimacy among all members of the society so that we may help those who are sick or in difficulty.<sup>8</sup>

It is clear that next to Sōtō, the Nichiren sect's establishment of teaching assemblies and lay societies played a pioneering role very early in the Restoration era.

*The Propagation of the Regulations  
for Teaching Assemblies and Lay Societies*

The teaching assemblies and lay societies gradually unfolded after the issuing of the rulings by the Ministry of Doctrine in 1872 and 1874 on “Establishing chief abbots of doctrinal instructors,”<sup>9</sup> which led to the formation of the twelve sects and thirty-seven branches. The number of teaching assemblies and lay societies expanded until they reached their peak around 1882.

By that time the relationship between Buddhism and politics was changing: the Ministry of Doctrine was abolished; the administration of religious affairs was transferred to the Shrine and Temple Bureau in the Ministry of Home Affairs; the position of Shinto and sectarian Buddhist doctrinal instructors was removed in 1884; and the restructuring of the Buddhist institutions led by their chief abbots was gradually being allowed.

The chief abbots of the twelve sects and thirty-seven branches of Buddhism, who were waiting for a change in religious policy, all started

<sup>8</sup> “Myōhōkō shōjō kessha kisoku” 妙法講清淨結社規則. In *Myōhō shinshi* 33, 13 October 1881.

<sup>9</sup> “Kyōdōshoku kanchō setchi” 教導職管長設置. In *Daiyōgō tatsusho otsu daisangō* 第4号達書乙第3号.

to compile sectarian prescriptions and temple rules with the intention of establishing modern religious institutions. It is in this context that the “regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies” (*Kyōkai kessha jōrei*) were formulated. These regulations served as guidelines for incorporating the small organizational elements into the new sectarian prescriptions.

At this time an editorial in the *Meikyō shinshi* 明教新誌 periodical pointed out the mistake made by the Ministry of Doctrine when it arbitrarily intervened in Buddhist affairs. The writer addressed the minister of Home Affairs, Count Yamagata Aritomo 山県有朋 (1838–1922), as follows in the hope that religion and politics would be kept separate in the administration.

The fact that the Ministry of Doctrine has recently been abolished and its work transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs is a real blessing for all Buddhist sects (*kyōmon* 教門). It is also a great opportunity to promote again the central teachings of Buddhism in these days marked by the defilements of the final period of the Dharma (*jokuaku masse* 濁惡末世)....

Concerning the sectarian rules and prescriptions, let the different sects and branches be allowed to set them out in agreement with their own respective traditions and be permitted to do as they wish, as long as it does not interfere with the administration of the country. As for the land revenues (*rokusho* 祿所), the educational facilities (*danrin* 談林), or the other possessions belonging to the head temples of each sect, leave the entire responsibility of their administration to the private authority of their teaching dignitaries, who are experts in these matters.<sup>10</sup>

This editorial, by taking the position that religion and state should be separate, pressured the Minister of Home Affairs to change religious policy. This was quite bold at a time when newspapers were strictly regulated.

The Ministry of Home Affairs was pressured by intellectuals inside and outside Buddhism who argued for freedom of religious belief. Thus, the post of Shinto priest doctrinal instructor was abolished in January of 1882, and religious activities by Shrine Shinto priests were prohibited (MKR 1968, p. 70). The government, seeing that it would be hard to repress public opinion that supported the separation of

<sup>10</sup> *Meikyō shinshi* 412, 2 February 1877. At this time *Meikyō shinshi* published a series of articles emphasizing the freedom of belief and the separation of religion and state, which aroused a public debate. See numbers 426 to 487.



religion and state, compromised by supporting clearly the non-religious nature of Shrine Shinto. In August of 1884 the Ministry went one step further in completely abolishing Buddhist and Shinto doctrinal instructors. After ten years of dogged perseverance, Buddhist priests were finally granted the opportunity to engage in teaching activities that reflected their original Buddhist traditions.

Concerning the government's handling of the sectarian prescriptions and temple rules, the Council of State made it mandatory in 1884 for all sects to have their sectarian prescriptions and temple rules authorized:

Article 4: The chief abbots must decide on the following provisions in accordance with the principles of their respective teachings and the tradition they intend to disseminate (*sono rikkyō kaishū no shugi* 其立教開宗ノ主義), and then ask to have them authorized by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

(*Dajōkan futatsu daijūkyū gō* 太政官布達第19号, 11 August 1884)

However, on 18 March 1885 the government made an addenda to its former declaration and sent to all chief abbots of Buddhist institutions the following notice “Concerning the important items that must be incorporated into the sectarian prescriptions and temple rules” (*Naimushō tatsu tei daiichigō* 内務省達丁第1号).

After having received the authorization for your sectarian prescriptions and temple rules, all previously authorized sectarian prescriptions and temple rules will become invalid. Therefore, you must incorporate all additional important items you wish to get authorized in your sectarian prescriptions and temple rules, and request to have them approved. Inform others of these instructions. (MKR 1968, p. 840)

The proclamation of these consecutive ministerial orders presented several challenges to the twelve sects and thirty-seven branches, which were under pressure to restructure their institutions as a whole and had to overcome internal difficulties in balancing the needs of the different branches. At any rate, the “regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies” were included as an important part of the sectarian prescriptions.

The topic of teaching assemblies and lay societies is one that has barely been explored, and presents a mountain of problems. Our first priority will therefore be to arrange the regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies by sect or branch and by date, and to examine how many teaching assemblies and lay societies have been established for each of the sects and branches. Further review of the

general tendencies revealed by such a survey should enable us to pick out the main problems that arose in the formation of these various institutions. In this regard it is important to observe that the intentions and goals formulated in the different regulations had gradually changed from the early period of their issuance to the later developmental period. The main factor for these changes appears to be a shift in the attitude of the leaders who were in charge of the various Buddhist institutions. As their institutions were becoming more stable and the administrative system more regulated, these leaders appear to have been especially willing to put lay societies under the command of the teaching assemblies.

I would also like to examine general tendencies among teaching assemblies and lay societies by looking at their evolution from the time lay societies or leagues (*kessha dōmei* 結社同盟) first emerged, up to the revision of the “regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies.”

The common aim of the “regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies” directed at sectarian Buddhism was primarily to form groups based on faith and establish precise methods for proselytizing. This can be inferred from the *Sōtōshū kyōkai jōrei* 曹洞宗教会条例 [Regulations for teaching assemblies of the Sōtō sect], which states that “[people may] attain insight (*nōnyū* 能入) through faith, but faith relies on [an appropriate] guidance (*kyōdō* 教導).” This document adds “let us determine on what the people should rely,” thus advocating the formation of groups by like-minded individuals within a confraternal society. One can also mention the example of the Higashi branch of the Shin sect, which aimed for a “confederate society of believers,” or the case of the Seizan branch 西山派 of the Jōdo sect, which emerged as “a single society that exercises control over both priests and lay followers.”

The common objectives shared by the different sects are also reflected in their use of the appellation “teaching assemblies” and “lay societies.” These words were handled in the various sects as general terms that encompassed the whole of sectarian Buddhism. This is illustrated, for example, by the Sōtō Kyōkai 曹洞教会 [Sōtō teaching assembly], the Jōdoshū Seizanha Kyōkaisha 浄土宗西山派教会社 [Society for the teaching assemblies of the Seizan branch of the Jōdo sect], the Shinshū Ōtaniha Kyōkai 真宗大谷(東)派教会 [Teaching assembly of the Ōtani (Higashi) branch of the Shin sect], the Shinshū Honganjiha Kyōsha 真宗本願寺派教社 [Teaching society of the Honganji branch of the Shin sect], and the Shingonshū Shingiha Mitsugon Kyōkai 真言宗新義派密嚴教会 [The Mahāvairocana realm teaching assembly of the Shingi branch of the Shingon sect]. Each sect and branch attached tremendous importance to bringing in new members; bylaws of the regulations specified that each new member would be awarded

a name plate (*hyōhai* 表牌) with the number of the group to which he or she was assigned in his or her province, and an individual affiliation number. In the wake of the formation of the new sectarian Buddhism, such efforts by the different sects reveal their wish to determine a precise image of the “fervent believers” that they intended to attract.

When examining these regulations we note first that the article labeled “lay society” begins with a passage mentioning the formation of a “small teaching assembly” (*shōkyōkai* 小教会), which is to form a new relationship between clerics and believers. The article “one small teaching assembly” (*ichi shōkyōkai* 一小教会) further elaborates on “small subsocieties” (*shōbunkai* 小分会) centered on the above-mentioned “fervent believers.” These small sub-societies are equivalent to the confraternities (*kōsha* 講社), a genre that exemplifies popular beliefs rooted in tradition, but that is described here from the standpoint of modern sectarian Buddhism. Such groups were the small organizational elements that could support the whole system, and that had been missing in Buddhist institutions at that time. Likewise, the “general teaching assembly” (*sōkyōkai* 総教会) placed under the jurisdiction of the regional middle teaching academies is depicted in these regulations as the “one small teaching assembly” (*ichi shōkyōkai*) of a specific area, which functioned as a global group centered around a specific belief. In other words, the teaching assemblies and lay societies of modern sectarian Buddhism emerged as a result of the systematization of the groups of believers that integrated clergy and laity, i.e., the global organizations called “general teaching assemblies,” which were spreading in every prefecture throughout the country under the supervision of different sects and branches.

While they were involved in the redaction of their respective sectarian prescriptions and temple rules, how did the leaders of the Buddhist sects gradually come to interpret the function of teaching assemblies and lay societies as the smallest organizational elements at their disposal? This question also provides us with one of the most important perspectives for our present task of examining the establishment of sectarian Buddhism.

#### SHINGON SECT

In April of 1879 the Shingon sect abolished its former system of chief abbots for each branch within the sect and set up a system of one chief priest for the entire sect (Ministry of Home Affairs, notification no. 1 内務省告示1号). In February of 1886 the Shingon authorities received the official sanction for their sectarian prescriptions and temple

rules, which were aimed at controlling the entire sect; but in the *Shingonshū shūsei* 真言宗宗制 [Shingon sectarian prescriptions] and in its subdivision entitled *Shingonshū shūsei jimu jōrei* 真言宗宗制事務条例 [Administrative regulations for the Shingon sectarian prescriptions] there is no trace of the insertion of passages from the *Shingonshū kyōkai kessha jōrei* 真言宗教会結社条例 [Regulations for the Shingon sect teaching assemblies and lay societies] that had been previously enacted in 1876.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, however, the Shingi branch of Shingon received authorization for its *Shingonshū shingiha kyōkai saisoku shōtei* 真言宗新義派教会細則章程 [Standards for the bylaws of the teaching assemblies of the Shingi branch of the Shingon sect]. These standards instituted their own branch prescriptions, called *Shingonshū Shingiha hasei* 真言宗新義派派制 [Branch prescriptions of the Shingi branch of Shingon], which are included as its 179th article, but differ from the above *Shingonshū shūsei*. The above points clearly show that Shingon was made up of two strands: the Shingon sectarian prescriptions and temple rules that aimed at governing the whole school; and the branch prescriptions that served as a foundation for the teaching assemblies and lay societies, which were the smallest organizational elements.

#### JŌDO SECT

In the case of the Jōdo sect, the regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies were incorporated into the Jōdo sectarian prescriptions in the following manner:

##### Section one: Purport of the teachings

Article 1: The essential purport of our teachings is to believe in the original vows of the Buddha Amida, which derive from Śākyamuni's teachings, and to realize the wonderful achievement of [being reborn in] the Pure Land through the recitation of Buddha Amida's name (*myōgō o tonae* 名号ヲ称エ).

##### Section two: Teaching assemblies

Article 4: The teaching assembly is made up of men and women who believe in the purport of the teachings described in the previous section.

Article 5: In general those affiliated with the teaching assembly are called "members of the assembly" (*kaishu* 会衆), while members will call each other "friend in the teaching [assembly]" (*kyōyū* 教友). Those members of the assembly who should

<sup>11</sup> *Shingonshū shūsei* 真言宗宗制. Promulgated by Shingonshū Hōmusho 真言宗法務所 10 February 1886.

engage in proselytizing are called “teachers” (*kyōshi* 教師) or “assistant teachers” (*kyōshiho* 教師補) and everyone else is a regular member of the assembly. The young women (*joshi* 女子) in the congregation who have not yet understood the purport of the teachings are also considered members of the assembly.

Article 6: It is necessary that members of the assembly engage in the following three kinds of practice (*jissen* 実践): 1) You must reach a clear understanding of morals (*rinni* 倫理) by repaying the four debts of gratitude (*shion o hōji* 四恩ヲ報ジ) and observing the ten good deeds (*jūzen* 十善); 2) You must equally enable everyone to benefit from the teachings by spreading your own faith without restriction to all the people you have a relationship with (*zaien no hito* 在縁ノ人); 3) You must help elderly people, feel compassion for the sick, save those in poverty, and give generously (*shinjutsu* 賑恤) to disaster victims.

Article 7: Concerning the above matters, members of the assembly are granted that, if they follow the appropriate procedure, they can make a proposal to our middle office (*chūkyōkaisho* 中教会所), to our large office (*daikyōkaisho* 大教会所), or to the sect’s central office (*shūmusho* 宗務所); or they can also present a petition. Regular members are also granted the right to receive guidance from the preachers (*kyōkeshi* 教化師) and associate preachers (*junkyōkeshi* 準教化師) belonging to their respective teaching associations; they can listen to the sermons and request the preachers to dissipate their doubts.

(“Fu shūsei gikai” 附宗制義解 November 1898; JSR 1933)

The above “Regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies,” incorporated in the *Jōdo shūsei* 浄土宗制 [Jōdo sectarian prescriptions] as its “Chapter 2: teaching assemblies,” show distinctive characteristics. The first section of these regulations echoes the first section of the *Jōdo shūsei* by describing the purport of the teachings as the recitation of the Buddha’s name (*nenbutsu shōmyō* 念仏称名); it also reflects the fifth and sixth section of the *Jōdo shūsei* by itemizing the religious practices of repaying the four debts of gratitude, observing the ten good precepts, and exercising charity (giving generously to elderly people, the sick, paupers, and disaster victims). The spirit of the teaching assemblies and lay societies in their formative years made its mark through these concrete religious practices.

#### SŌTŌ SECT

On Meiji 9/10/20 (20 October 1876), the Sōtō sect received authorization for its “Regulations for teaching assemblies” (*Sōtōshū kyōkai jōrei*

曹洞宗教会条例) from the Ministry of Doctrine and promulgated it among the Sōtō subtemples throughout the country. Later, in accordance with the 1884 notification from the Council of State, as well as the 1885 article 4 on “Sectarian prescriptions” of the Ministry of Home Affairs’ notification, the Central Office of the Sōtō sect submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs a request for authorization of its sectarian prescriptions, which were accepted. The foreword to the section “Number four: Regulations for teaching assemblies” specifies that:

Strict [application] of temple rules [only guarantees] a well-ordered training environment (*dōjō* 道場). In other words it is necessary to determine [first which] teaching areas (*kyōku* 教区) [will be attributed to whom], then each temple will be requested to investigate how it will propagate the teachings. To this end we have stipulated the regulations for teaching assemblies as in number four [of the sectarian prescriptions].

(*Sōtōshū futatsu kō daiikyūgō* 曹洞宗布達甲第9号; SFZ 1884)

#### SHIN SECT

The Ōtani branch of the Shin sect had its sectarian prescriptions and temple rules (*Shinshū Ōtaniha shūsei jihō* 真宗大谷派宗制寺法) authorized in Meiji 19/04 (April 1886), and in September of the same year notified all its subtemples of this decision. However, the world of “friendship between companions engaged in the same practice” (*dōbō dōgyō* 同朋同行) depicted in the Kyōto Rengō Shakai 教徒連合社会 [Federated society of lay followers], a text included in the *Shinshū Ōtaniha kyōkai kessha jōmoku* 真宗大谷派教会結社条目 [Articles on teaching assemblies and lay societies in the Ōtani branch of the Shin sect], did not leave any visible influence in these prescriptions and temple rules, neither in section five on “Adherents and believers” (*Monto shinto* 門徒信徒), nor in section six on “How to propagate the teaching” (*Fukyō hōhō* 布教方法). Section six rather contains the advice: “Watch the adherents and believers to see if they have faith or not, and encourage their wholehearted study of our teachings (*kyōgaku* 教学)” (*Shinshū Ōtaniha shūsei jihō* 真宗大谷派宗制寺法 12 September 1886).

In Meiji 18/11 (November 1885) the Ōtani branch of the Shin sect sent to all its subtemples the *Sōzoku kō shuisho* 相続講趣意書 [Statement on the intent of the confraternity for the perpetuation (of genuine practice)] and *Sōzoku kō kiyaku* 相続講規約<sup>12</sup> [Prescripts of the confraternity for the perpetuation (of genuine practice)], two notifications that bear the signature of the secretary (*shūji* 執事) Abe Egyō 阿部慧行 (SOSJ 1886). As a result of this notification, which placed the confraternities under the direct supervision of the head temple, everything

written on the teaching assemblies and lay societies completely disappeared from Ōtani's periodical *Haishi* 配紙.

These documents illustrate the fact that the *Shinshū Ōtaniha kyōkai kessha jōmoku*, which dealt with teaching assemblies and lay societies in their formative years, was completely different in intent from the *Sōzoku kō kiyaku* 相統講規約, which aimed first at centralizing the control over Shin followers. Such a shift suggests that from this point on the teaching assemblies and lay societies naturally started to disappear.

*The Consolidation of Religious Institutions  
and the Vicissitudes of Teaching Assemblies and Lay Societies*

One of the motivations for common believers who gathered in teaching assemblies and lay societies might have been that, after being released from the bondage of the old temple registration system, they sought peace of mind by independently choosing their own faith. An example of such ardent hope among commoners can be seen in the *Ridan shuishi* 離壇趣意書 [Statement on the intent of those who broke away from the parish (temples)], a pamphlet written by the Allied Lay Society for Breaking Away from the Parish Temples (*Dannadera ridatsu dōmei kessha* 壇那寺離脱同盟結社), a society that was formed through an uprising by followers of the Honganji branch of the Shin sect in the ancient Asake 朝明 and Mie districts of the Ise domain:

In regards to our school, today's system appears to be exactly like the feudalism of ancient times. All the subtemples around the country are like the lords, and the believers affiliated with each temple are like their property. In this situation where orders from the head temple are often not carried out, [the subtemples] cannot engage in any dynamic movement....

This being the case, how could the situation be improved? Even if we report this to the head temple, it would not be capable of doing [anything]....

Even if we seek the advice of subtemples, there is no one [capable] there....

We and our like-minded comrades (*wagahai dōshi* 我ガ輩同志) make a pledge: we shall break away from our ancient parish temples; we shall call ourselves simply "followers of the Honganji

<sup>12</sup> Both notifications are recorded as article 38c (*Hei daisanjūhachi jō* 丙第38条) in the original source: *Haishi* 配紙, 29 August 1884, *Hei yonjūgo gō* 丙45号. It adds: "To expand proselytizing activities the confraternities will be placed under the direct supervision of the head temple. Concerning the revisions of these rules, charter member Fukuda Kakujiō 福田覚城 and his colleagues have been asked to proceed with the necessary discussions."

branch of the Shin sect”; we shall choose by divination the appropriate location to build a place for practice (*dōjō*), which will also serve for propagating our teachings; we shall invite a priest whom we respect and trust, and he will be asked to supervise [this center]....

Meiji 20/04 (April 1887), [signed by] the advocates for the improvement of the Honganji branch of the Shin sect.

(“Ridan shuisho” 離壇趣意書. In *Meikyō shinshi* 明教新誌 2065, 12 August 1886)

An editorial of the *Meikyō shinshi* (2064), reported on this Statement as follows:

There are already 670 people who agree [with this proposal] within the two districts advocating the withdrawal from parish temples in [line with] the above [*Ridan*] *shuisho*. Moreover, since an increasing number of people in the two districts of Kuwana 桑名 and Inabe 員弁 agree with them, this [movement] will obviously extend to the whole Ise region, and perhaps even to the whole country.

This uprising by Shin sect believers also represents an unexpected declaration of intent by fervent followers of the Honganji branch, at a time in the late 1880s (the Meiji 20s) when sectarian Buddhism had already entered a period of stability. The Honganji branches’ treatment of its lay followers was changing radically around this time. Evidence of this can be found in the revised regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies, where the former spirit of “oneness between clergy and laity” (*sōzoku ittai* 僧俗一体) had fundamentally collapsed. In the revised version we see that the “society of priests” (*sōryōsha* 僧侶社) and the “society of believers” (*shintōsha* 信徒社) are divided in two separate sections included in Article 3. It was also a period when the head temple was strengthening its administration system with priests at the center, thereby moving in the direction of instituting a fixed category represented by the separate small organizational element called “society of believers” (FUTABA 1977).

In this way, regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies were modified, while the institutional system of sectarian Buddhism was consolidating. The more vigorously a traditional school was involved in proselytizing activities, the more often the articles of its regulations would be revised. At least in the formative period of the teaching assemblies and lay societies, the “teaching assembly” represented an organization belonging to the traditional school, while the “lay society” embodied a group formed out of a common belief, but both were intimately related through the ties of oneness between clergy



and laity. At the same time, both congregations always kept some distance from the religious institution, their members hoping for a new type of organization in which clergy and laity could be well balanced. However, it appears that the situation surrounding the teaching assemblies and lay societies gradually started to change when the different Buddhist institutions entered a period of stability in the 1880s.

I would now like to examine the trends among the sects when they became consolidated institutions by scrutinizing the circumstances in which teaching assemblies and lay societies were formed as the smallest organizational elements of each sect. I have listed in a chart (figure 1) the number of teaching assemblies and lay societies in the different sect and branches between their formative period beginning in 1875–1876 and their period of full development after 1882. As we can see, the total number of teaching assemblies and lay societies was: 128 for the Sōtō sect, 80 for the Shingon sect, 50 for the Jōdo sect, 38 for the Honganji branch of the Shin sect, 32 for the Nichiren sect, 24 for the Ōtani branch of the Shin sect, and 20 for the Tendai sect. As for the other sects and branches, the documents I have been able to consult reveal a negligible number of teaching assemblies and lay societies.

Incidentally, among the groups emerging in the developmental period prior to the 1880s, there are two societies that appear prototypical of a certain evolution: the Sōtō Fushūkai 曹洞扶宗会 [Sōtō Assembly for Upholding the Tradition], founded by Ōuchi Seiran 大内青巒

**Figure 1.** Number of teaching assemblies and lay societies by year

Year (Meiji)	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Total
Tendai	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	2	4	0	0	1	2	3	2	0	20
Shingon	0	1	4	0	3	6	6	3	16	8	13	11	6	3	0	0	80
Jōdō	1	1	5	0	2	3	4	7	3	4	6	7	4	3	0	0	50
Ji	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Rinzai	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
Sōtō	1	3	2	2	1	2	9	14	17	14	17	15	13	3	0	15	128
Ōbaku	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Shinshū Honganji	0	2	5	1	3	2	2	5	1	0	3	2	11	1	0	0	38
Shinshū Ōtani	0	1	0	4	0	1	3	1	2	7	0	3	1	1	0	0	24
Shinshū Senjuji	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Shinshū Bukkōji	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Shinshū Izumoji	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Nichiren	0	0	2	0	5	1	1	3	8	1	1	8	2	0	0	0	32
Yūzū Nenbutsu	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hossō	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Kegon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	11	19	8	15	18	26	36	52	34	43	48	39	16	2	16	385

(1845–1918) in Meiji 20 (1887), and the Shinshū Kyōkai Shūonsha 真宗教会酬恩社 [Shin Sect Teaching Assembly and Society for Repaying the Debt of Gratitude], founded by Onojima Gyōkun 小野島行薰 in Meiji 11 (1878) after receiving authorization from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

#### SŌTŌ SECT

First, concerning the Sōtō sect, the data must be understood in the context of a large traditional school possessing over 14,300 temples. Despite this there were only 113 teaching assemblies and lay societies established between 1872 and 1888 in accordance with the Sōtō Sect Regulations for Teaching Assemblies. This limited number suggests that there was something hindering Sōtō's proselytizing activities. These 113 small organizational elements were too weak to support the declining Sōtō institutional structure. The stagnation of the proselytizing activities was also caused by a lack of clarity in the articles of faith available to common believers.

On Meiji 18/05/28 (28 May 1885), attached to the "Prescriptions for the Sōtō sect" (*Sōtōshū shūsei* 曹洞宗宗制) was a preamble to the fourth section called *Sōtōshū shūkyō taii* 曹洞宗宗教大意 [Outline of the principles and teachings of the Sōtō sect].<sup>13</sup> This preamble supports the idea of "peace of mind [attained through] the founder's ideas" (*shūi anjin* 宗意安心)<sup>14</sup> as one of the school's essentials, and proclaims a teaching strategy based on a radical distinction between monastics and the laity. In the text of the preamble, however, the sect's office in charge of this publication does not give any clear reason to explain why it interprets "peace of mind [attained through] the founder's ideas" as "an exclusive practice [that leads to] rebirth within one thought [through] the power of the other" (*senju tariki ichinen ōjō* 専修他力一念往生), an expression strongly suggestive of Pure Land teachings. This caused a major disturbance about the appropriateness of such "peace of mind [attained through] the founder's ideas." In order to dispel the confusion, the sect's Central Office resolved to

<sup>13</sup> Translator's note: The first use of the compound *shūkyō* 宗教 to translate the English word "religion" can be traced back at least to Keiō 03/07/07 (6 August 1867), but at that time it was used to indicate Christianity. The gradual spreading of this word to include all other faiths presumably became more popular after the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, which was widely reported in the press. The conference name was translated either as *Bankoku shūkyō kaigi* 万国宗教会議 or as *Sekai shūkyō taikai* 世界宗教大会. For details on this important issue, see SUZUKI 1979, pp. 13–17.

<sup>14</sup> Translator's note: The understanding of *shūi anjin* in the Sōtō tradition has some specific implications. The *Zengaku daijiten* interprets this catchword as "to attain an unmovable faith in the doctrine of the sect's patriarch." In other words, it implies complete reliance on the works attributed to Dōgen.

publish a special issue of its official notification (*gōgai rontatsu* 号外論達). This notification expounds the following about how the “peace of mind and the unmistakable [state]” (*anjin ketsujō* 安心決定) should be understood by monastics and lay believers:

There is no discussion [about the fact] that by following the principles and teachings of our sect “peace of mind and the unmistakable [state]” [can be realized] easily and at once (*yōi tossa* 容易咄嗒). For that reason the *Shūkyō taii* has devised [the expressions] “single-minded power of the self and realization of buddhahood in this very body” (*tanjun jiriki sokushin jōbutsu* 單純自力即身成仏) and “an exclusive practice [that leads to] rebirth in one thought [through] the power of the other,” which were [aimed at] responding to the more or less high capacities of clerics and lay persons. This is because “the power of the self and the power of the other, the rebirth and realization of buddhahood within one thought in this very heart” (*jiriki tariki sokushin ichinen ōjō jōbutsu* 自力他力即心一念往生成仏) [are teachings] that have always been familiar to the Buddhas and patriarchs, [although] they have actually been eliminated from the Dharma teachings (*hōmon* 法門) of later generations....

However, there are some individuals who are relying [only] on the letter to elucidate the meaning. Since they have entertained doubts [about the above expressions that] differ from the traditional teaching patterns (*kyōshiki* 教式) and we cannot avoid it, from now on you are requested to wait for instructions about which doctrinal contents (*hōgi* 法義) to teach when using “gradual” (*zen* 漸) [means] to guide the laity, and about the methods for propagating our teachings. (SFZ 1885)

For the Sōtō sect, establishing a precise “method for teaching lay persons” (*zaike kyōkehō* 在家教化法) was vital for the sect’s survival. Despite this need for clarification the above text vividly tells us that many priests within the Sōtō sect continued to give sermons blending the ideas of realization of buddhahood with rebirth in the Pure Land.

This demand led to the redaction of a manual by Tsuji Kenkō 辻 顯高 (1824–1890), the *Sōtō kyōkai sekkyō taii narabini shinan* 曹洞教会説法大意并指南 [Outline of the Sōtō teaching assemblies and sermons, with practical instructions], which was written at the request of the sect’s authorities to provide a method for teaching lay persons. However, it never really succeeded in being acknowledged as a book expressing “the peace of mind [attained through] the founder’s ideas” on which the whole sect could rely.

Ultimately, for religious groups such as the teaching assemblies and

lay societies, the only way to succeed was for the clergy and laity to unite and empirically apprehend for themselves this “peace of mind [through] the fundamental principle.” This is why the priests who were also heads of the 1,100 confraternities of the Sōtō Fushūkai 曹洞扶宗会 finally chose not to adopt the method of enrolling all their parishioners automatically into Fushūkai. They first dealt with the admission of members belonging to the category of dedicated believers, who were to play a central role in the formation of small teaching assemblies.

The regular column of the Fushūkai’s periodical, *Sōtō Fushūkai zasshi*, containing articles on the society itself set forth a policy that aimed at building up groups centered around one belief, where clergy and laity would be unified. This policy also aimed at training dedicated believers who should attain peace of mind [through] the fundamental principle of “original enlightenment and marvelous training” (*honshō myōshu* 本証妙修); for this purpose the column solicited the affiliation of new regular members (*seishain* 正社員 priests) and twenty or more associate members (*join* 助員) of Fushūkai who could help the project succeed. A report in the same periodical entitled “Excess of both regular and associate members” recounted the number of dedicated believers from Fushūkai confraternities around the country who had received medals (*Sōtō Fushūkai zasshi* 曹洞扶宗会雑誌 no. 14, 29 March 1889).

The Sōtō Fushūkai started out as a league and lay society with the objective of designing a clear method for teaching lay persons, a task that had already been identified as a central issue in the “Sōtō Sect Regulations for Teaching Assemblies” enacted in 1876. This is why the Fushūkai appears to have been so successful in absorbing all the hundred plus teaching assemblies and lay societies that were established from 1877 to 1887. The Fushūkai first solved the difficult problem of formulating a method for teaching lay persons, an issue that had troubled the sect for some time, and as a result compiled the long-awaited manual called the *Tōjō zaike shushōgi* 洞上在家修証義 [The meaning of practice and realization for lay persons in the Sōtō tradition]. The headquarters of the Fushūkai distributed this manual to 1110 of its lay societies and confraternities throughout the country, and deployed a considerable amount of energy to make known to everybody “the peace of mind [attained through] the founder’s ideas,” which was detailed in the manual’s four essential points derived from the idea of “marvelous training [conducted for] original enlightenment” (*honshō myōshu*).

Because the Sōtō Central Office feared the increasing influence of the Fushūkai, which had become a large-scale organization, a bill was proposed at the general meeting of the Sōtō sect in April 1889. This

“proposal for merging proselytizing methods” (*fukyōhō gappei no kengi* 布教法合併ノ建議) recommended the incorporation of the Sōtō Fushūkai and its affiliated confraternities (*Fushū kōsha* 扶宗講社) into the Sōtō teaching assemblies (belonging to the central institution); it was accepted during the meeting:

After the Fushūkai was established in 1887, the members of the association have met with great success in their gradual efforts to improve the public opinion for the entire sect. Since they were mainly engaged in offering guidance to lay persons (*zaike kedō* 在家化導) they compiled the *Tōjō zaike shushōgi* 洞上在家修証義 and thus contributed to clarifying the essential meaning of “the peace of mind.” This [manual] was distributed to Fushūkai members. [As a result,] now over eighty percent of the abbots of Sōtō temples who bear the responsibility for offering guidance [to lay persons] are members of the Fushūkai and each of them widely disseminates the [teachings of the] *Shushōgi*. In this situation where over eighty percent of the abbots of Sōtō temples agree with the content of the *Shushōgi*, there is no doubt this manual enjoys the trust of our whole school. Since every section of the *Shushōgi* contains passages of the sayings of our founder (Dōgen), it should be even more obvious that there is no reason for objecting [to its adoption].

(*Kō dainijūgō Tōjō zaike kedō hyōjun* 甲第25号  
洞上在家化導標準 [No. 25b Standard for the  
Sōtō guidance of lay persons]; SFZ 1889)

This resolution shows how the sect’s general assembly determined that the *Shushōgi* “will become the standard on which members of the Sōtō teaching assemblies [will rely to attain] peace of mind” (*Sōtō kyōkai kaishū anjin no hyōjun to suru koto* 曹洞教会会衆安心ノ標準トスルコト). In only a few short years the Fushūkai developed rapidly, and ended just as abruptly, when it was incorporated into the Sōtō teaching assemblies. However, the ideas of the formative period of teaching assemblies and lay societies are still alive today among priests and laity through the four essential points in the *Shushōgi*: Annihilation of faults by repentance (*sange metsuzai* 懺悔滅罪), entrance into the position [of a Buddha] by taking the precepts (*jukai nyūi* 受戒入位), benefiting sentient beings by formulating vows (*hotsugan rishō* 発願利生), and repaying gratitude by steadfast practice (*gyōji hōon* 行事報恩).

#### SHIN SECT

The Shin sect is the largest Buddhist institution in Japan, with over 19,000 temples, but despite this it had little more than sixty teaching

assemblies and lay societies. The Otani branch of the Shin sect has in particular permitted establishment of teaching assemblies and lay societies in accordance with the clause of its prescriptions on lay societies. Among those lay societies was the Yakujiō Kōsha 亦成講社 [Rebirth confraternity]. In July 1874 this lay society came under the direct control of the head temple, and in November of the same year its officer, Atsumi Kaien 渥美契縁 (1840–1906), became the superintendent of all the confraternities (*kōsha sōkan* 講社總監) (*Haishi*, 23 August 1884, leaf no. 1744). The general rules section of chapter one of the *Yakujiō kōsha kisoku* 亦成講社規則 [Rules for the rebirth confraternity] specifies that: the Yakujiō Kōsha will be directly placed under the jurisdiction of the head temple of the Ōtani branch of the Shin sect (article 1); if a person has received the guidance and protection of a head priest (*hossu* 法主), our society will attest that this person is either a cleric converted to our branch (*honpa kie no sōryo* 本派帰依ノ僧侶) or a lay believer converted to our branch (*honpa kie no shinto* 本派帰依ノ信徒) (article 2); in order to support the head temple and spread the doctrine of the sect, the object [of our society] will be to inspire the people by instructing them (*kyōdō* 教導) and engaging in aid work (article 4) (*Haishi*, 27 February 1885).

This document suggests that, since the confraternity gave priority to the establishment of a strict administrative system, it faced difficulties within the Shin sect when it sought to constitute a confraternity based on oneness between clergy and laity.

Another association was the Shinshū Kyōkai Shūonsha 真宗教會酬恩社 [Society for repaying the debt of gratitude, teaching assembly of the Shin sect] started by Onojima Gyōkun. This association was indeed a teaching assembly/lay society established in accordance with the *Shinshū Honganjiha kyōkai kessha jōrei* 真宗本願寺派教會結社條例 [Regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies of the Honganji branch of the Shin sect], but it had the nature of a pan-Buddhist lay society that partially gained its independence and was not bound to one particular sect or branch. The “Teaching assembly’s guidelines” of the Shūonsha published the following four articles based on the four debts of gratitude enumerated in the “Fascicle on repaying gratitude” from the *Daijō honshō shinjikan gyō* 大乘本生心地觀經 [Mahayana sutra on the contemplation of the (Buddha’s) heart in previous lives]: Gratitude to one’s parents for their nurturing (*fubo seiiku no on* 父母生育ノ恩); gratitude to the emperor for his supreme benevolence (*kōjō shinin on* 皇上至仁恩); gratitude to [those who granted their] great compassion and helpful guidance (*daihi sekke on* 大悲摂化恩); and gratitude to the people for their friendship (*jinmin kōsai no on* 人民交際ノ恩).

With the power of its teaching assemblies and lay societies that had 200,000 members and many subsections throughout the country, the Shūonsha always kept its distance from the institution of the Honganji branch and positioned itself against its administrative system. There is evidence of this recorded in the *Shūonsha's Honsha enkaku ryakki* 酬恩社本社沿革略記 [Abridged history of our society's headquarters]:

In Meiji 9 (1876), having received permission from Kumagaya Prefecture,<sup>15</sup> we set up the headquarters of our society in the village of Shimobara, in the Ōsato district of the ancient country of Musashi. In August 1878 we also received permission from the Ministry of Home affairs and set up several branch offices. The first one was opened in Shinmeichō of Shimomae-bashi in Gunma Prefecture. The second one in Sumiechō of the station house (*shuku* 宿) of Kumagaya in Saitama Prefecture. Then in Meiji 11/11 (November 1878) we opened our third branch office in Yōkamachi in the station of Hachiōji in Kanagawa Prefecture. After this we received permission from each of the prefectural authorities to set up branch offices.

（“Honsha enkaku ryakki” 本社沿革略記。

In *Meikyō shinshi* no. 950, 8 March 1880)

After the *Shūonsha kisoku* 酬恩社規則 [Rules for the Shūonsha] had been settled in November 1878, the society progressed with giant strides in little more than a few years. Looking back at this rapid development Onojima exclaimed:

The activities of the Shūonsha are rapidly expanding. Our membership is almost 200,000 and active members are in more than half the country. All these members who work for propagating the teachings have emancipated themselves from the yoke of the head temple's authority (*honzan no hayaku* 本山ノ霸軛) and all the powerful persons who wanted to act freely have become preachers for the Shūonsha.

(ONOJIMA 1966)

No more than thirty-eight teaching assemblies and lay societies can be counted that formed following the issuance of the *Shinshū Honganjiha kyōkai kessha jōrei*. This number is remarkably small compared with the Shingon and Tendai sects and is an issue deserving further research. The phenomenon we see in the Shūonsha might indicate that common Shin followers who had broken ties with their parish temples were looking for a sphere of independent belief and for an inner

<sup>15</sup> Translator's note: Kumagaya ken was briefly established as a prefecture in Meiji 6/6/15 (6 June 1873) before being incorporated into the present Saitama Prefecture.

peace of mind, which they sought in the preaching activities of the Shūonsha instructors.

The Nishi Honganji branch, however, took the opportunity to revise its *Shinshū Honganjiha kyōkai kessha jōrei* when each of the five Shin sect branches were about to have a chief abbot appointed in 1882. These revised regulations were then promulgated among the Honganji branch subtemples the following year, on 1 May 1883. The most important points of revision in these regulations can be summarized as follows.

Article 1: The principle of our teaching assemblies must be to unite the hearts of people, expand the teachings of [our] tradition (*shūkyō o kakuchō shi* 宗教ヲ拡張シ), and to bring our teachings to places where it does not exist (*mukyōchū o hiraku* 無教地ヲ拓ク).

This section first expresses the intent to expand the geographical borders of proselytizing activities, and emphasizes the need to adopt a resolute policy to implement missionary activities.

Article 2: In our branch, only [groups] that have gone through the [procedure of registration at the] head temple and received permission from the Ministry of Home Affairs will be officially recognized as teaching assemblies.

This is obviously aimed at reinforcing the effectiveness of the administration system supervising lay societies. The most important revisions are contained in the following third and fourth articles.

Article 3: There are three types of teaching assemblies or lay societies (*kyōsha* 教社): 1) societies for clerics (*sōryōsha* 僧侶社); 2) joint societies for clerics and the laity (*sōzoku kyōdōsha* 僧俗共同社); 3) societies for lay followers (*shintōsha* 信徒社).

Article 4: Teaching assemblies and teaching assemblies-lay societies must be limited to one per prefecture. However, when a teaching assembly [is known under] different specific society names (*shagō* 社号) there is no objection to having several of them in one single prefecture. (FUTABA 1977)

Because of these revised regulations, and particularly because of article 4 stipulating one lay society per prefecture, the Shūonsha that developed as a national organization up to this point was dissolved in May of 1883, and inevitably shrunk. Onojima Gyōkun, the founder of the Shūonsha, later recalled this development:

In the fall of 1882, when the government issued its “Regulations for public meetings” (*Shūkai jōrei* 集会条例), our head



temple also followed this [bad example] and issued regulations for teaching assemblies. It specified one teaching association for one area and we were confronted with the worst adversity when they forced the disbandment of the Society for the Great Teaching (Daikyōsha 大教社), which was the center of our network collecting [information] on the different areas throughout the country. (ONOJIMA 1966)

In 1883 the Shūonsha boasted of 200,000 members, but it is unclear how it disposed of its numerous branch societies around the country after the issuance of the revised “Regulations for teaching assemblies and lay societies.” Information on the Shūonsha after it was dissolved is recorded in Onojima’s work *Shōfukuji no saikō* 称福寺ノ再興 [Restoration of the Shōfuku-ji]:

In the winter of 1896 I was appointed abbot of Shōfuku-ji.... My duties [remaining] after the dissolution of the Shūonsha were still far from over. Fortunately, I could request my friend Ishigami Hokuten 石上北天 to serve as vice-abbot and I promised to fulfill my abbot’s duties once the lawsuits would reach a conclusion. (ONOJIMA 1966)

This text suggests that, even ten years after the Shūonsha was dissolved, branches of it were still alive throughout the country. Some originals from the *Shūon zasshi* 酬恩雜誌, the periodical published by the Shūonsha head office, were discovered in 1987 in the lining of a *fusuma* at Shōkō-ji 清光寺 in Maebashi city, Gumma Prefecture. Some unique manuscripts were discovered among these documents kept at Shōkō-ji, in particular the *Honsha kiji* 本社記事 [Columns from the main office of the society] and *Zappō* 雜報 [Miscellaneous news], which were contributions to the *Shūon zasshi* from branch societies around the country between 1884 and 1888. According to the *Shinshū kyōkai Shūonsha kiyaku* 真宗教会酬恩規約 [Prescripts for Shūonsha teaching assemblies of the Shin sect] and the laws and bylaws of the Shūonsha, these branch societies were supposed to have been abolished. These documents from the illusory periodical *Shūonsha zasshi* tell us a different story about the rise and fall of the Shūonsha, a story that has yet to be told.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

- HS *Haishi* 配紙. Shinshū Ōtaniha Shūmusho Shuppanbu 真宗大谷派宗務所出版部, ed. Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtaniha Shūmusho Shuppanbu, 1989. (Reprint)

- JSR *Jodoshū seiki ruiju* 浄土宗制規類聚. Mikawa Kyōhōsha Henshūbu 三河教報社編輯部, ed. Aichi: Mikawa Kyōhōsha, 1933.
- MKR *Meiji ikō shūkyō kankei hōrei ruisan* 明治以降宗教関係法令類纂. Monbushō Bunkakyoku Shūmuka 文部省文化局宗務課, ed. Tokyo: Daiichi Hōki, 1968.
- MKK *Myōhō kōsha kisoku* 妙法講社規則. In *Kindai Nichirenshū Nenpyō* 近代日蓮宗年表 p. 38 Nichirenshū Gendai Shukyō Kenkyūsho 日蓮宗現代宗教研究所, ed. Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1981.
- SOSJ *Shinshū Ōtaniha Shūsei Jihō* 真宗大谷派宗制寺法. In *Honzan Hōkoku (1)* 本山報告 no. 15 (Meiji 19/9/15), 1886. Reprinted by Higashi Honganji Shuppanbu 1988.
- SFZ *Sōtōshū Shūmukyoku Futatsu Zensho* 曹洞宗宗務局布達全書. Sōtōshū Shūmukyoku 曹洞宗宗務局, ed. 5 vols., 1872-1889. (Available in the Komazawa University library)

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1993 *The Lotus Sutra*. New York: Columbia University Press.