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A Comparative Analysis of Buddhist Nationalism in Asia

ŌTANI EIICHI

FIRST, I would like to begin this paper with reference to a single photograph taken of an encounter between Buddhist nationalists of Sri Lanka and Japan. (See figure 1 on the next page.)

It is a commemorative photograph taken at Kamakura, one of Japan's ancient capitals, on 23 June 1902. The figure in the center of the photograph is Anagārika Dharmapāla (1864–1933) of Sri Lanka, thirty-eight at the time of the photo, and to his left is Tanaka Chigaku 田中智学 (1861–1939) of Japan, age forty-one. They were each lay leaders of Buddhist groups (the Maha Bodhi Society, and the Kokuchūkai 国柱会, or “Pillar-of-the-nation Society,” respectively). Dharmapāla was in the position of being “neither monk nor layman,” and Tanaka was a laicized former monk.¹ In addition, they were also Buddhist nationalists who devoted their lives to calls for the revival and reform of Buddhism, as well as the flourishing of the ethnic nation. These Buddhist nationalists from South and East Asia met in Japan on this day at the start of the twentieth century to engage in dialogue. This was the only occasion on which they spoke with one another.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the historical significance of the encounter and discussion between these two Buddhist nationalists in terms

¹ Tanaka took the tonsure in the Nichiren 日蓮 sect at the age of eight, but laicized at the age of seventeen. For the rest of his life, he continually called for reform of the Nichiren denomination. Dharmapāla was not officially ordained until just before his death in 1933, when he took the *upasampadā*, or “complete precepts.” Yet he did wear the yellow robes of a monk while keeping his hair long like a householder. He consistently argued for reform of the traditional religious organization from the standpoint of neither monk nor layman, which is indicated in his choice of appearance.



Figure 1. Photograph of Anagārika Dharmapāla and Tanaka Chigaku in Kamakura, Japan, 1902 (Source: Kokuchūkai)

of a comparative analysis of Asian Buddhist nationalisms.² As I will relate in more detail later, I believe that the two shared a number of commonalities, and that by analyzing their thought and activities, we may clarify the distinctive characteristics of modern Buddhist reform movements and their connection with “Buddhism and nationalism.”

MODERN BUDDHISM AND PROTESTANT BUDDHISM

The Distinctive Characteristics of Modern Buddhism

Dharmapāla and Tanaka were not monks of traditional Buddhism, but rather Buddhist modernists. They reinterpreted traditional Buddhism, acting from the position of a reconstituted “Modern Buddhism” (or “Buddhist Modern-

² Concerning the meeting of these two figures, there is the study by Satō Tetsurō in his *Dai-Ajia shisō katsugeki: Bukkyō ga musunda, mō hitotsu no kindaiishi* 大アジア思想活劇：仏教が結んだ、もうひとつの近代史 (Satō 2008). For a comparison of the thought of each, see Ishii Kōsei’s paper “Dharmapāla’s Activities in Japan” (Ishii 2004). The present research owes much to the research by these two scholars concerning Dharmapāla’s activities in Japan. Shimoda Masahiro refers to Dharmapāla and Tanaka in his article on the relationship between modernization and Asian Buddhism (Shimoda 2006).

ism”). At this point, we are faced with the problem of defining this modern Buddhism (or, Buddhist Modernism).

For instance, Donald S. Lopez, referring to the distinctions between traditional and modern Buddhism, has pointed out the many commonalities between modern Buddhism and other projects of modernity. Further, as distinctive features of modern Buddhism, he has adduced the themes of the denial of ritual and magical elements, of equality as opposed to hierarchy, of universalism as opposed to local particularity, of the individual as opposed to the community, and of the return to the Buddha.³ Additionally, David L. McMahan has held (referring to the research by Lopez) that the concept of Buddhist modernism signifies not all forms of Buddhism that developed in the “modern era,” but rather new forms of Buddhism that appeared amidst relations with the dominant cultural and intellectual influences of modernity. As well, he has adduced Westernization, de-mythologization, rationalization, romanticization, Protestantization, and psychologization as distinctive characteristics.⁴ In short, both of these scholars have thematized the relationality between “modernity” and “Buddhism,” and have pointed out the features distinctive to modern Buddhism in general.

However, as Sueki Fumihiko has explained in his summary of the intention behind the international gathering which led to this feature, “Modern Buddhism as considered when centered in Euroamerica presents a rather different face from modern Buddhism as considered when centered in the countries of Asia,” and “first of all, what constitutes ‘the modern’ is itself quite different in the cases of Euroamerica and Asia.” In order to clarify this point, I would like to draw your attention to the concept of “Protestant Buddhism” as proposed by Gananath Obeyesekere.⁵

The Distinctive Characteristics of Protestant Buddhism

The term “Protestant Buddhism” has a double meaning, according to Richard Gombrich and Obeyesekere. Those meanings are (1) Buddhism as a kind of “protest” against the suzerainty of the United Kingdom in general and its Christian Protestantism, and (2) its own Protestant character.⁶ Gombrich and Obeyesekere define “Protestant Buddhism” by drawing a distinction between the Buddhist reform movement in Ceylon in the latter half of the nineteenth

³ Lopez 2002, p. iv.

⁴ McMahan 2008, pp. 6–8.

⁵ Obeyesekere 1970, p. 46.

⁶ Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988. A Japanese translation of this work is available in Shima 2002. See especially chapters 1 and 6.

century, and traditional Sinhalese Buddhism. They treat Dharmapāla as the first proponent of that movement. Again, as the historical background for the emergence of Protestant Buddhism, they point out the general situation brought about by contact with the West (modern knowledge and Western-style education, print and literacy, the appearance of a Sinhalese middle class and the embourgeoisement of Sinhalese society), as well as the particular situation of Protestant missionary activities.⁷

Between the two Protestant characteristics specified by Gombrich and Obeyesekere (protest against the West and Christianity, and a Protestant character in reformist Buddhism), the latter effect of Protestantism is evident in a wide range of Asian modern Buddhisms. Sueki has pointed out the effect of Protestantism on Japan's modern Buddhism:

Attempts to find in Protestantism a model for a modern religion, and to re-vision Buddhism in line with that ideal, are already evident from Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 (1838–1911) in the early Meiji period; for that matter, outside Japan as well, the same tendencies were an important feature of modern Buddhism. This has often been designated “Protestant Buddhism.”

One of its defining characteristics is the rationalization of doctrine, underlying which is implied the rejection of magical aspects of Buddhism.⁸

To begin with, the concept of “religion” in modern Japan is itself a translation of *religion*, a term which was formed through the influence of Protestantism. As Isomae Jun'ichi has argued in his analysis, the Christian conception of “religion” centered on belief (a conceptualized system of faith) and took shape through the exclusion of practice (non-linguistic, habitual action).⁹ The Japanese concept of a rationalistic, disenchanting “Buddhism” was formed as a reflection of this conception of “religion.”¹⁰

On the other hand, protest against the West and against Christianity (particularly protest against the colonialism of the West) is also an important analytic point of view for considering the formation of modern Buddhism

⁷ Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988, p. 203; Shima 2002, p. 306.

⁸ Sueki 2004, p. 175.

⁹ See chapter 1 of *Kindai Nihon no shūkyō gensetsu to sono keifu: Shūkyō, kokka, Shintō* 近代日本の宗教言説とその系譜：宗教・国家・神道 (Isomae 2003).

¹⁰ Ōtani 2011. However, the actual situation in Japanese Buddhism even after modernity is that customary and ritual traditional Buddhism and folk Buddhism co-exist alongside this kind of rational modern Buddhism.

across Asia. However, as Je Jum-suk reports below, when we consider protest against colonialism in the East Asian world, we must consider protest not only against the West, but also against Imperial Japan.¹¹ In other words, we ought to examine the process of formation of modern Buddhism in the East Asian world within the multilayered structure “West—Japan—China—colonies (Korea, Taiwan).”

In short, the influence of Western Protestantism on the development of modern Buddhism throughout Asia was complex, including elements of both adoption and resistance on the part of Buddhists. In addition, analysis of the role played by Buddhism regarding Western (and Japanese) colonialism in the history of modern Asia is also essential. The concept of “Protestant Buddhism,” as proposed by Gombrich and Obeyesekere, can serve as a useful analytical tool for considering these problems.

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BUDDHIST REFORM MOVEMENTS IN ASIA

When we view the activities of Dharmapāla and Tanaka, we see that they were protesting against not only Christianity but also traditional Buddhism. Gombrich and Obeyesekere have indicated that the Protestant Buddhism of Sri Lanka “not only incorporat[ed] Protestant values but also [was] a radical protest against traditional Buddhism.”¹² Tanaka also voiced a protest against traditional Nichiren Buddhism. We might say that these two forms of Buddhist modernism also share this distinctive characteristic of being Buddhist reform movements in Asia.

At this point, I would like to draw your attention to the research of Shima Iwao, who has undertaken a comparative analysis of the Buddhist reform movements in regions of modern Asia: India, Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), Sri Lanka, China, Vietnam, and Japan.¹³

Shima has noted the following commonalities of the movements in these regions: (1) an attitude of returning to the source and to source texts; (2) rationalistic and humanistic interpretations of Buddhism; (3) religious equality for the laity; (4) a tendency toward social reform; (5) “enlightenment”

¹¹ See Je’s “The Modernity of Japanese Buddhism and Colonial Korea: The Jōdoshū Wakō Kyōen as a Case Study,” pp. 181–203, below.

¹² Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988, p. 215.

¹³ Shima’s study does not take up Buddhist reform movements in Korea, but naturally there were efforts at Buddhist modernism there as well. For instance, see Hur 2010, which analyzes the thought and activities of Han Yong’un 韓龍雲 (1879–1944).

thinking centered on intellectuals; (6) the reconception of Buddhism as something on par with Christianity; and (7) Buddhism as the political, social, and cultural foundation for nationalism.¹⁴ Further, he states that these features were defined along axes of opposition—against modern Western rationalism; against the great powers of the West; and against Christianity. In other words, he indicates that they originated as protests against the West and Christianity. However, he also sees these movements as protests not just against the West or Christianity, but also against traditional Buddhism (and this shares many commonalities with the general depiction of modern Buddhism as described by Lopez, McMahan, and others).

As it were, then, Buddhist reform movements in modern Asia arose taking protest against the West, Christianity, and traditional Buddhism as important impetuses, and it may be understood that they constructed their own group identities within relationships of tension with these. In this paper, I will go on to explore the features distinguished by Shima through the cases of Sri Lanka and Japan, paying particular attention to the seventh commonality that he describes, Buddhism as the political, social, and cultural foundation for nationalism. Within the imperialist world-system of that period, it was indispensable for the regions of Asia to build nation-states while opposing the great powers of the West. The problem, then, was what sort of connection Buddhists would forge with the formation of those nation-states.

Employing the preceding problematic, I shall now proceed to analyze the thought and actions of Dharmapāla and Tanaka, two Buddhist modernists and nationalists.

COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DHARMAPĀLA AND TANAKA

In figure 2, I concisely summarize the major events in the lives of both Dharmapāla and Tanaka.¹⁵

The two shared many commonalities: they both began their Buddhist reform movements in the 1880s; as we see in the publication of *Bukkyō fūfu*

¹⁴ Shima 1998, pp. 12–13.

¹⁵ Concerning the life of Dharmapāla, see Bhikshu Saṃgharakshita (1952), “Anagārika Dharmapāla: A Biographical Sketch”; Japanese translation available as Fujiyoshi 1963. I have also referred to Amunugama 1985, Shibuya 1980, and Satō 2008. Concerning the life of Tanaka, I have made use of Tanaka 1974 and Ōtani 2001. For the writings of Dharmapāla, see Gurunge 1965. The writings of Tanaka may be read in the *Shishiō zenshū* 師子王全集, which is made up of thirty-six volumes published between 1932 and 1937 by the Shishiō Bunko 師子王文庫.

Year	Anagārika Dharmapāla	Tanaka Chigaku
1861		3 November: Born in Nihonbashi 日本橋, Edo 江戸 (later Tokyo). Childhood names: Hidemaru 秀丸, later Tomonosuke 巴之助.
1864	14 September: Born in Colombo. Childhood name: David Hewavitarne.	
1870		July: Ordained in a temple of the Nichiren sect.
1871	Dharmapāla studies at St. Benedict College.	
1873	August: Debate at Pānadura (between Buddhism and Christianity).	
1875		October: Enters the Great Teaching Institute (Daikyōin 大教院) of the Nichiren sect (contemporary Risshō University).
1878	Dharmapāla enters St. Thomas College.	
1879		Laicizes.
1880	May: Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907) and Madame Blavatsky (1831–1891) make landfall in Sri Lanka and convert, becoming “Buddhists.” June: They establish the Buddhist Theosophical Society.	
1881		April: Creates the Rengekai 蓮華会 (Lotus Society), a group for lay Buddhists.
1883	March: The Kotahena Riot (Buddhists are attacked by Catholics).	
1884	January: Dharmapāla joins the Theosophical Society.	January: Tanaka makes inroads into the San’ya 山谷 district of Asakusa 淺草 in Tokyo, and establishes the Risshō Ankokukai 立正安国会 (Society for the Establishment of Orthodoxy and Pacification of the Nation). He begins his movement to reform the Nichiren sect.
1885	Begins to style himself “Dharmapāla,” or “protector of the Buddhadharma.”	
1886	Travels throughout the island of Sri Lanka with Olcott, working for the revival of Buddhism.	
1887		February: Publishes <i>Bukkyō fūfu ron</i> 仏教夫婦論 (On the Buddhist Couple).
1889	February: Olcott and Dharmapāla arrive in Japan.	

1891	May: The Buddhagaya Maha Bodhi Society is established. October: An International Buddhist Congress is held at Buddhagaya.	
1892	The office of the Maha Bodhi Society moves to Calcutta (now spelled Kolkata). May: The inaugural publication of the <i>Maha Boddhi</i> [sic] <i>Journal</i> .	
1893	September: Dharmapāla participates in the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago. October: Second trip to Japan.	
1894		In response to the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), Tanaka holds “Dharma-meetings to Pray for the Nation” (<i>kokutōe</i> 国禱会), rituals praying for the defeat of the enemy and victory in battle.
1895	October: Changing from the white clothes of a layman to the yellow robes of a monk, Dharmapāla styles himself “Anagārika” (one without a home).	
1896	Undertakes missionary work in the United States and Canada.	
1898	Publishes the <i>Gihī Vinaya</i> (Code of Conduct for Householders).	
1901		May: Publishes <i>Shūmon no ishin</i> 宗門之維新 (The Renewal of the [Nichiren] Sect).
1902	April: Third trip to Japan. 23 June: Discussion with Tanaka.	23 June: Discussion with Dharmapāla.
1904		April: At the time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), donates copies of his work <i>Sekai tōitsu no tengyō</i> 世界統一の天業 (The Heaven-sent Task of Unifying the World) to soldiers.
1905	September: Olcott declares the “Buddha’s tooth,” the symbol of Sri Lankan Buddhism, to be fraudulent, earning the wrath of Dharmapāla and other Buddhists.	
1906	May: Dharmapāla founds the Sinhala-language newspaper <i>Sinhala Bauddhayā</i> (The Sinhala Buddhist).	
1911		August: Tanaka first advocates the “Study of the National Essence (<i>kokutai</i> 国体) of Japan.”

1912	Dharmapāla supports a strike by rail workers.	
1913	April: Fourth trip to Japan.	
1914		November: Founds the Kokuchūkai (Pillar-of-the-nation Society).
1915	May: In Kandy, Muslims and Buddhists clash (the Ceylon Riots). Suspected of having incited the riots, Dharmapāla is driven out to Calcutta for five years.	
1923		November: Establishes a political organization, the Rikken Yōsei-kai 立憲養正会 (Constitutional Society for Fostering Righteousness).
1924		April: Stands for election in the National Diet but is defeated.
1931	July: Dharmapāla is formally ordained and becomes a <i>śramaṇa</i> . His monastic name is Devamitta Dhammapala.	
1933	January: Dhammapala accepts the Complete Precepts (<i>upasampadā</i>) and becomes a fully ordained monk or bhikṣu. 29 April: Dies aged sixty-nine.	
1935		June: Lectures in Manchuria. July: Lectures in Korea.
1939		17 November: Dies aged seventy-eight

Figure 2. Summary of major events in the lives of Dharmapāla and Tanaka

ron (1887) and the *Gihi Vinaya* (1898), they laid out guidelines for the daily life of the laity; and beginning in the early 1900s, they increasingly clamored for a Buddhist nationalism. Here I would like to examine (1) the relationships between religion and the state in Sri Lanka and Japan, and the role that Christianity played in each; (2) Buddhist revivalism and the attempts to return to origins and original texts; and (3) their focus on the laity. (I will compare their Buddhist nationalisms below, in the fifth section of this paper.)

Relations between Religion and the State, and Christianity in Sri Lanka and Japan

In order to understand the intellectual formation and the significance of the activities of these two men, we must first grasp the relationship between religion and the state in Sri Lanka and Japan.

From the time that Theravada Buddhism was transmitted to Sri Lanka around 250 BCE, historical kingship there had maintained a structure of Buddhist kingship, founded on the trinity of “Buddhism—King—Samgha.”¹⁶ However, after the advance into Sri Lanka by Portugal in 1505, its domination by the Netherlands from 1658, and finally colonial rule over the entire island by the United Kingdom in 1815, the Kandyan dynasty fell. When the United Kingdom assumed control over the entire island, it signed a convention with the Kandyan dynasty, promising to support and protect Buddhism, its rituals, its samgha, and its places of worship. However, this convention faced opposition from the Protestant denominations, causing the British government to rescind its policy of protection for Buddhism, and to adopt a policy giving priority to Christianity. As a result, Protestant missionary activity received preferential treatment, and mission schools were established.

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, mission schools had occupied the mainstream of Sri Lanka’s educational system, transmitting modern knowledge and skills, and inculcating education in the Western style among the masses. In addition, because of the establishment of a colonial economic structure and economic development, there arose a new elite (commercial capitalists, bureaucrats, doctors, and teachers) among the indigenous Sinhalese, the Tamils of Indian origin, and the Muslims, as well as an urban proletariat.¹⁷

As Shibuya Toshio has pointed out, “From the latter half of the nineteenth century through the beginning of the twentieth, resistance to British control largely took the form of movements to revive Buddhism.”¹⁸ Particularly after 1860, resistance through movements to revive Buddhism was undertaken by monks and the Sinhalese elite.¹⁹ This was carried out through the establishment of Buddhist monastic schools, and public debates between Buddhist monks and Christian missionaries. In particular, the public debate conducted in August 1873, in the western coastal town of

¹⁶ Sugimoto 1997, p. 132. For the following account see not only the article by Sugimoto, but also Gombrich 1991, its Japanese translation, Mori and Yamakawa 2005, the previously cited Gombrich 1988, and Endō 2011.

¹⁷ Shibuya 1998, p. 202.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 211. This observation, he says, applies not only to the Buddhist revival movement among the Sinhalese, but also to Hinduism among the Tamils, and Islam among the Muslims.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

Pānadura, between the Elder Migetṭuwatte Guṇānanda (1823–1890) and the Wesleyan David De Silva (n.d.), referred to as the Pānadura Debate, was much touted as a victory for Buddhism against Christianity.

For its part, Japan, which had received Mahayana Buddhism around the middle of the sixth century CE, had come to adopt a system by which political authority (the “royal Dharma”) and monastic institutions (the “Buddhadharma”) co-existed like the wheels of a cart (this is the “discourse of mutual dependence between the royal Dharma and the Buddhadharma”). And during the early modern period (the Edo period, 1603–1868), temples were assured of their social standing through the parishioner system (*danka seido* 檀家制度), which linked temples permanently with parishioners through funerary rituals and requirements for family registration.

However, with the advent of the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Meiji government cut off its ties with the Buddhist community. This government, which at first adopted a policy of making Shinto the state religion, discarded the religious tradition of assimilation between native and Buddhist deities that had existed since the ancient period, and in 1868 issued an order requiring the separation of Buddhism and Shinto. Further, in 1871, it ordered temples and shrines to “return” much of their land to the government, and in 1872, it permitted monks to eat meat and take wives openly, thus depriving them of their economic and class security, and imperiling the very survival of the Buddhist community. Still worse, with the promulgation of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan in 1889, the division between state and religion was institutionalized, and official relations between the government and the Buddhist community were completely cut off.

It was within these social conditions that Christian missionary activity began to flourish. For nearly two hundred and fifty years, the Edo military government (*bakufu* 幕府) had forbidden Christianity, but with the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce between Japan and the United States in 1857, American Christian denominations began to dispatch missionaries to Japan. In 1873, the Meiji government officially recognized Christianity. Within Japan, too, some people began to come into contact with Christianity through education and medical treatment in the foreign settlements and the cities, and to embrace the faith. Next, beginning in the latter half of the 1870s, Christianity started to spread into rural towns and farming villages.²⁰ It was the Buddhist community who felt the most threatened by this spread

²⁰ Dohi 1980, p. 45.

of Christianity. Clerics and intellectuals with connections to Buddhism used lectures and published texts to wage a campaign of criticism of Christianity (*haja kenshō* 破邪顯正, “refuting errors and demonstrating the truth”; alternately, “demolishing the ‘heretical preaching’ and manifesting ‘righteousness’”).

From the preceding discussion, we can see that several concerns were common to Sri Lanka and Japan: pressure from the great powers of the West (in the case of Sri Lanka, colonization; in the case of Japan, the imposition of unequal treaties); the decline of the position of the Buddhist community through its division from political authority; and the influence of Christian education and reaction against Christianity.

The Buddhist Revival and the Return to Origins and Source Texts

Dharmapāla was born in 1864 in British-governed Colombo into the family of a wealthy furniture merchant. Including his parents, among his relatives there numbered many devout believers in Buddhism. As a son of the new elite, the Sinhalese middle class, he received a Western-style education in a mission school, acquiring modern knowledge and literacy skills. Additionally, as a child, he heard about the debate at Pānadura.

However, it was his encounter with Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky of the Theosophical Society that stimulated Dharmapāla’s awakening to Buddhism. Having learned about the debate at Pānadura, Colonel Olcott arrived on the island together with Madame Blavatsky in May 1870 and established the Buddhist Theosophical Society. Dharmapāla, who joined the Society in 1884, originally intended to study occultism, but started to learn Pali at the recommendation of Madame Blavatsky.²¹ Through his study of Pali, he would go on to form an affinity with the Buddha and his teachings.

The “white Buddhist” Colonel Olcott undertook a variety of reforms to Buddhism, such as the creation of the Buddhist flag, the composition of a *Buddhist Catechism*, the campaign for the official recognition of Wesak (Vesak) as a public holiday, and the establishment of Buddhist schools to oppose mission schools, thus contributing to the revival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka.²² As a “patron” of Protestant Buddhism, Colonel Olcott exerted a great influence on Dharmapāla.

²¹ Gurunge 1965, p. 687.

²² Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988, pp. 204–5; Shima 2002, p. 308. I have also referred to “The Sinhalese Buddhist Revival,” chapter 4 of Prothero 1996.

However, from around the time of the founding of the Buddhagaya Maha Bodhi Society in 1891, the relationship between Colonel Olcott and Dharmapāla began to worsen.²³ In opposition to the universalist tendencies of Colonel Olcott, who saw Buddhism and Hinduism as basically similar, and who respected the ultimate fundamentals of all religions, Dharmapāla stressed the superiority of Buddhism, and came to espouse a particularist Buddhist nationalism which linked that superiority to race and the ethnic nation.

Dharmapāla personally experienced the Buddhist revival in 1880s Sri Lanka as he supported Colonel Olcott. Under the influence of a “creole Buddhism”²⁴ reinterpreted by Colonel Olcott in the idiom of Protestantism, he fashioned a cult of a rational and dis-enchanted single Buddha, which he would go on to develop into a Buddhist reform movement and a Buddhist nationalist movement.

Tanaka, on the other hand, was born the son of a doctor at Nihonbashi in Tokyo (then called Edo) in 1861. His father was a fervent Buddhist believer who belonged to a lay society within the Nichiren sect. Tanaka lost both of his parents when he was still young, and at the age of eight he received the tonsure in the Nichiren sect. He studied at the sect’s educational institutions but could not reconcile himself to the interpretation of the sect dominant at the time, and he resolved to “return to the founding patriarch,” or Nichiren 日蓮 (1222–1282). Then, at the age of nineteen, he laicized. In other words, in this case, and unlike Dharmapāla, Tanaka urged a return not to the Buddha, but to Nichiren, his patriarch. Having said that, his teachings differed from the positions taken by traditional Nichiren Buddhism, and Tanaka labeled his own teachings “Nichirenism” (*nichirenshugi* 日蓮主義). That constitutes what McMahan has called “a new form of Buddhism,” or what Yoshinaga Shin’ichi has called “New Buddhism,” in the broad sense.

From his founding of the Rengekai (Lotus Society) in 1880 (in 1884, renamed the Risshō Ankokuikai [Society for the Establishment of Orthodoxy and Pacification of the Nation]; in 1914, again renamed the Kokuchūkai [Pillar-of-the-nation Society]), Tanaka was consistently engaged with the movement to reform Buddhism (in particular, the Nichiren sect) from the standpoint of the laity. From 1885 onward, he frequently held public lectures, and he criticized other Buddhist sects. Further, in line with the tendencies of the general Buddhist community of the day, he also conducted lectures in which he criticized Christianity.

²³ Prothero 1996, pp. 158–69.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

It should be borne in mind that unlike Dharmapāla, Tanaka never received a Western-style education, nor did he study Christianity. However, in his strict prohibition against the proliferation of objects of veneration, and his denial also of rituals from folk cults, his faith was extremely “Protestant” in character, making a cult of a rational, dis-enchanted Nichiren (in Japan, many branches within the Nichiren sect, as well as other sects of Buddhism, recognized these elements, which Tanaka sought to suppress). However, while on the one hand Tanaka preached a revivalist return to the founder of the sect, he was also a modernist who insisted on the reform of traditional sectarian institutions, and who conducted proselytizing activities making full use of the latest media.

In 1889, while Tanaka was engaged in the movement to reform the Nichiren sect, Colonel Olcott and Dharmapāla arrived in Japan. They received a hearty welcome from the Japanese Buddhist community, and their presence became a symbol of the revival of Buddhism in Japan.²⁵ Tanaka made no allusion to this event, and met Dharmapāla only thirteen years later. However, Tanaka’s activities were themselves one movement among the “new forms of Buddhism” that emerged within the revival of Buddhism in Japan from the latter half of the 1880s onward.

Lay-centered Buddhism

Gombrich says that “one outstanding feature” of Protestant Buddhism is “that it places importance on the layperson, without placing comparable importance on the saṃgha.”²⁶ As I have already mentioned, Dharmapāla took the stance of being neither monk nor layperson, and Tanaka that of the layman. Further, both also shared the commonality of producing guidelines for the daily life of the laity.

Dharmapāla criticized the situation of the Sinhalese after their colonization, writing, “Asia is full of Opium eaters, ganja smokers, degenerating sensualists, superstitious and religious fanatics. God and priest keep the people in ignorance.”²⁷ In order to improve the daily-life situation of the Sinhalese and to make their religious activities obligatory, in 1898, Dharmapāla published a Sinhala-language pamphlet titled *Gihī Vinaya* (Code of Conduct

²⁵ See “Deploying Western Authority I: Henry Steel Olcott in Japan,” chapter 7 of Snodgrass 2003.

²⁶ Gombrich 1991, p. 213; Mori and Yamakawa 2005, p. 291.

²⁷ Cited in Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988, p. 213; Shima 2002, p. 319.

for Householders).²⁸ This included two hundred regulations in twenty-four headings, including dining manners, the proper method for using the toilet, etiquette for walking along the street, etiquette at public gatherings, lay etiquette with respect to the samgha, and etiquette for lay male and female devotees during visits to temples. “By and large, Protestant and Western norms have been assimilated as pure and ideal Buddhist norms.”²⁹ Additionally, Gombrich and Obeyesekere point out that these were “a powerful ethics of inner-worldly asceticism” in Buddhist form for the emergent Sinhalese elite and middle classes. The “Protestant character” of Protestant Buddhism is clearly evident in this sort of ethics of inner-worldly asceticism for the laity.

For his part, Tanaka composed both *Bukkyō fūfu ron* (1887) and *Bukkyō sōryo nikusai ron* 仏教僧侶肉妻論 (On Buddhist Monks’ Meat[-Eating and Taking of] Wives, 1889). In the case of Japan, through the 1872 issuance by the government of permission for monks to eat meat and take wives, the Buddhist precepts had been nullified. As the monastic identity was shaken, Tanaka attempted to lay the theoretical foundations for lay Buddhism. Even as he proclaimed a lay Buddhism based upon the relationship between a married couple in secular life, he also affirmed meat-eating and wife-taking in monastic Buddhism, and stressed that it was the lay bodhisattva who was the genuine monk for the present day. Because the monastic precepts had lost their efficacy in the era of the Final Dharma (*mappō* 末法), Tanaka took faith itself as the precept appropriate for this era.³⁰

Additionally, he criticized “funeral Buddhism” (the mode of traditional Buddhism which depends on the conduct of funerary rites): “[We] should stop dealing with the dead, and start dealing with the living. We should abolish the religion of funerals and make it a religion of wedding ceremonies.” In fact, he designed his own original Buddhist-style baptisms for infants and wedding ceremonies conducted before Buddhist images. Like Dharmapāla, Tanaka attempted to lay out a Buddhist lifestyle and create an ethic of asceticism within secular society for the laity.

It should be noted that in 1924, there were not many members of the Kokuchūkai, only about seven thousand. They derived from the middle and upper classes of society, centered on the urban middle class, and including monks and teachers, middle- and small-scale tradesmen, managers of middle- and small-scale factories, and white-collar workers. Tanaka actively

²⁸ Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988, pp. 213–14; Shima 2002, p. 320.

²⁹ Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988, p. 215; Shima 2002, p. 327.

³⁰ See chapter 1 of Ōtani 2001.

affirmed this present world, and stressed the faith of the laity and an inner-worldly ethics based on that faith.

THE CONVERSATION OF 23 JUNE 1902

At this point, I would like to take up the aforementioned conversation between Dharmapāla and Tanaka at Kamakura on 23 June 1902.

Dharmapāla made four trips to Japan, in 1889, 1893, 1902, and 1913.³¹ During the first trip, he was accompanying Colonel Olcott right into the midst of the Buddhist revival. However, since Dharmapāla was not well, he spent almost the entire time in a hospital in Kyoto. On the second trip, he came to Japan after having founded the Maha Bodhi Society and having attended the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and his goal was to gather funds for the restoration of the Buddhist sites at Buddhagaya. Next, at the end of April 1902, Dharmapāla undertook his third trip to Japan. This time, his purpose was to enlist aid in establishing Buddhist schools. While in Japan, Dharmapāla "criticized the stagnancy of Buddhism centered on renunciants and encouraged the activities of lay believers and Buddhist youth."³² The background for these attitudes lies in the real accomplishments of the Buddhist youth movement that Dharmapāla organized in Sri Lanka, charity activities by the laity, and educational activities. However, within the Japanese Buddhist community, some people held a low opinion of Dharmapāla's drive to recover Buddhagaya from the Hindus, because Japanese Buddhist journalists severely criticized his activities as it became clear that his efforts to restore the sites associated with the Buddha had not made significant progress.

Under these circumstances, Dharmapāla engaged in conversation with Tanaka in Kamakura.³³ The two became acquainted through Tanaka's disciple, Yamakawa Chiō 山川智忠 (1879–1956), who had made inquiries about Indian historical facts to Dharmapāla. Dharmapāla, wearing his yellow robe, was greeted by Tanaka, wearing the formal garb of the Nichiren sect, as well as several senior members of the sect and the famous literary critic, Takayama Chogyū 高山樗牛 (1871–1902). The meeting changed locations

³¹ Concerning Dharmapāla's visits to Japan, see Satō 2008, Yamakawa 2000, Ishii 2004, and Satō 2011.

³² Satō 2008, p. 383.

³³ The following account is based on Yamakawa 1902, an article carried in the August 1902 issue of *Myōshū* 妙宗, the official periodical of the Risshō Ankokukai (later to become the Kokuchūkai). Note that this article introduces Dharmapāla as the first "Indian" ever to visit a sacred site associated with Nichiren, but Dharmapāla was a "Sinhalese."

several times, from a facility of the sect, to a gourmet Japanese restaurant, to the sacred site where Nichiren had preached on the street, to the Nichiren temple Ryūkōji 龍口寺, to a hotel. Incidentally, the picture was taken at the sacred site at which Nichiren had conducted his open-air preaching in his thirties, a location which had just been restored by Tanaka earlier in the same year.

The content of the dialogue ranged across many areas. Here I would like to examine (1) the overseas propagation of Japanese Buddhism, (2) opposition to the West and to Christianity, and (3) the relationship between the Sri Lankan royal house and the Japanese imperial house.

The Overseas Propagation of Japanese Buddhism

Dharmapāla, who held high hopes for Japanese Buddhism, expressed his wishes for its overseas propagation. Asked by Tanaka how many times he had come to Japan, Dharmapāla first replied that this was his third trip, and he related that because Japan's civilization had advanced every time he came to Japan, along with this progress, "I earnestly hope that the Buddhists of this country will carry out impressive activities, and spread the light of the Buddha to the world." In reply to this, Tanaka answered that the Buddhism of Japan, which had been transmitted from India through China, had complex doctrines differing by sect and branch, and that he would particularly like to speak about Nichiren. (Incidentally, Dharmapāla's only knowledge of Nichiren came through the brief biography of Nichiren written by Arthur Lloyd.³⁴)

Here, the difference in the awareness of each party is clear. In contrast to Dharmapāla, who wanted to transmit "the entirety of Buddhism" to Westerners, Tanaka, who regarded the teachings of Nichiren to be "authentic Buddhism," wished to promote the "particular doctrines" of Nichiren Buddhism to the world. The background for this difference lies in the differences between the saṃghas of these two regions—Sri Lankan Buddhism, with only three sects, versus Japan's, which at the time was divided into thirteen sects, with a total of fifty-six branches—and in Tanaka's sectionalism.

Tanaka referred to passages in Nichiren's *Kenbutsu mirai ki* 顕仏未来記 (A Testimony to the Prediction of the Buddha, 1273): "Buddhism does not exist in India"; "the moon rises in the west and shines on the east. The sun rises in the east and shines light on the west. Buddhism spreads the same way: In the Ages of the True Dharma and Semblance Dharma, it spreads from west

³⁴ Lloyd 1911.

to east; in the Latter Age of Degeneration, it spreads from east to west.”³⁵ He expressed his hope that Nichiren’s “particular subtlety” (i.e., his particularly fine Dharma) would first advance into China and India, and then be transmitted to the countries of the West, and finally “religiously unify the whole world.”

However, Dharmapāla noted that at present, the most active Japanese sects were the Honganji 本願寺, with churches, publications, and missionaries in America, India, as well as other countries overseas; when he asked why the Nichiren sect could not match the Honganji, Tanaka replied, “I am so ashamed as to break out in a sweat.” He might have answered that, compared with the roughly twenty thousand temples arrayed in the True Pure Land sects, his own Nichiren sect had only roughly five thousand.

Opposition to the West and to Christianity

What both parties *did* agree upon was their opinion of opposition to the West and to Christianity. Tanaka described having heard that Dharmapāla had criticized the oppressive government of the British on behalf of the Indians at the World’s Parliament of Religions, and asked if this were not a racial problem. Again, Tanaka criticized this attitude of persecution by Westerners as a product of Christian morality, thus criticizing Christianity. Dharmapāla was also in agreement with this.

Dharmapāla asked if the return of the Buddhism of Japan to India would mean the earthly establishment of a great empire possessing the light of the Buddha. Whereupon Tanaka said that Nichiren’s true intention was to create “a people of the fine Dharma,” and that for this purpose “even war and weapons are certainly not to be shunned,” in this way affirming the use of force (this sentiment of his would strengthen further when he faced the Russo-Japanese War in the following years).

We can see that both Dharmapāla and Tanaka espoused the revival of the East and of Buddhism based upon an epistemological framework of simplified binarisms: “West/East,” “Christianity/Buddhism,” “civilization/savagery,” “matter/spirit.” Dharmapāla, who took his stand on faith in the single universal Buddha Śākyamuni, and Tanaka, who stood on particularist Nichiren Buddhism, differed in their individual positions, but these positions converged on the issue of opposition to the West, to colonialism, and to Christianity.

³⁵ The English translations of passages from Nichiren’s *Kenbutsu mirai ki* rely upon the text in Tanabe 2002, p. 176.

The Sri Lankan Royal House and the Japanese Imperial House

One more point of commonality shared by these two was nationalism. In this discussion, there was an exchange about the nation, particularly concerning the royal house of the island of Ceylon and the imperial house of Japan. Dharmapāla noted that, like the Japanese imperial house, the Ceylonese royal house had developed an intimate connection with Buddhism.

Tanaka spoke to Dharmapāla about the era of the myths concerning the foundation of the country of Japan, stating that over two thousand five hundred years earlier, Japan had been founded by Jinmu Tennō 神武天皇 (the mythic figure regarded as Japan's first emperor), whose ancestors had resided in the "Plain of High Heaven" (Takama-ga-hara 高天原, the mythic residence of the gods). In response to Tanaka's claim that this "Plain of High Heaven" had been a land still more ideal than the present Japanese state, Dharmapāla replied that there was the following oral tradition in Ceylonese history: Roughly two thousand five hundred years ago, about five hundred high-ranking aristocrats, superior in scholarship, technical skills, and the arts of war, had crossed the sea to an unknown destination. Dharmapāla is said to have suggested that their destination remains unknown, but that perhaps this was the origin of Jinmu Tennō.³⁶

In response, Tanaka said that he believed that the high aristocrats of India were wheel-turning kings (Cakravartī-rāja, a class of mythic kings in India), and that "the Venerable Śākyamuni's lineage is a lineage of wheel-turning kings, and a royal house of wheel-turning kings represents a stock of kings who unify the world."³⁷ From this point, Tanaka's thinking took an imaginative leap. In February 1904, Tanaka published a pamphlet titled *Sekai tōitsu no tengyō* (The Heaven-sent Task of Unifying the World). Copies of this were donated to several thousand soldiers setting off for the Russo-Japanese War. In this pamphlet, Tanaka drew upon Dharmapāla's point of view that the kingly line of great antiquity which had unified the world was the line of Indian wheel-turning kings, and that after Śākyamuni's *parinirvāṇa*, a group of high-ranking aristocrats had moved to the east. Tanaka claimed that the ancestors of the Japanese nation were a royal house of wheel-turning kings, and that the imperial house of Japan, which sprang from a lineage of wheel-turning kings, bore a mission to accomplish the moral unification of the present world.

³⁶ The preceding is an episode introduced much later (1936) in Tanaka's autobiography, published as Tanaka 1937.

³⁷ Tanaka 1937, p. 255.

It is Ishii Kōsei who first indicated this effect of Dharmapāla upon Tanaka. According to Ishii, Dharmapāla, who took a position of pacifism, and who sought an alliance among the Buddhists of Asia, in effect offered Japanese nationalistic Buddhists stimulation and substantiation for their beliefs. Further, Ishii analyzes Dharmapāla as having been affected to a certain extent by Japanese Buddhists, in the growth of his acquaintance with the scriptures of the Mahayana.³⁸

As we have seen, the meeting of 23 June 1902 at the very least influenced the formation of Tanaka's philosophy of Buddhist nationalism to no small extent. By incorporating the legend of the Indian wheel-turning kings into his thought, Tanaka found a mythological basis to legitimize the global role of the Japanese imperial house. Dharmapāla also found a sympathizer for his brand of Protestant Buddhism.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BUDDHIST NATIONALISMS ESPOUSED BY DHARMAPĀLA AND TANAKA

National Founding Legends and a Sense of "Chosenness"

Dharmapāla wrote, "The Lion-armed descendants are the present Sinhalese, whose ancestors had never been conquered, and in whose veins no savage blood is found."³⁹ He also emphasized that "the Sinhalese are a unique race."⁴⁰

As I shall explain, Dharmapāla relied on the myth of the foundation of the Sri Lankan nation, the *Mahāvamsa* (Great Chronicle of Sri Lanka), to link the Sinhalese with Aryan origins and the "lion" as their totemic origin, and to make vigorous appeals for their genealogical connections with the Buddha. Here Shibuya Toshio's observation merits attention: "We must keep in mind that the term 'Sinhala' itself, today used as though it were a self-evident ethnic concept, has historically embraced diverse meanings, and has undergone dramatic transformations."⁴¹ According to Shibuya, the use of "Sinhala" to refer to a linguistic group postdates the twelfth century, the ethnic identities known as "Sinhalese" and "Tamil" and their inimical relations developed after the sixteenth century and under a colonial regime, and the construal of the term "Sinhala" to refer to "Aryan" Buddhists who

³⁸ Ishii 2004, p. 5.

³⁹ Dharmapāla, "History of an Ancient Civilization," in Gurunge 1965, p. 479. Originally published as a booklet in Los Angeles, California in 1902.

⁴⁰ Gurunge 1965, p. 479.

⁴¹ Shibuya 1998, p. 191. The following quotes are also taken from this source.

speak Sinhalese all originate in the nationalism that was born in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In other words, Dharmapāla played an important role in the formation of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism that was taking shape at that time.

Next I would like to summarize the features of Dharmapāla's Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism, based upon the research of Jayaratna Banda Disanayaka, Shibuya Toshio, and Kawashima Kōji.⁴²

"Sinhala" means "the people of the lion," and the creation myth for the Sinhalese traces back to a lion wandering through the jungles of Bengal. Next, Dharmapāla held, 2,440 years ago, an emigrant group of Aryans left Bengal and discovered the Island of Lanka (Sri Lanka). The leader of this emigrant group was an Aryan prince named Vijaya, and his descendants were known as the Sinhalese. Dharmapāla thus invoked the notion of the Indo-Aryans as first proclaimed by European Orientalists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By stressing that the Sinhalese were of the Aryan race, "he linked them with the glory of ancient India, and was able to place them on par with the civilization of modern Western Europe."⁴³ Dharmapāla not only laid weight on the concept of ethnicity in the formation of an ethnic identity for the Sinhalese, he also emphasized race. In particular, by utilizing the authority of the modern Western concept of Indo-Aryan, he attempted to lend prestige to the Sinhalese from a racialist standpoint.

Further, through the *Mahāvamsa* and oral traditions, he also stressed the link of the Sinhalese to Buddhism. Dharmapāla emphasized that the Buddha had personally visited Sri Lanka three times, charging the heavenly deities with the spread of his teachings and the protection of the island; that the ancestor of the Sinhalese, Vijaya, landed on the island of Lanka on the very day that the Buddha died in India; and that the Sinhalese royal house was closely linked to the lineage of the Buddha's royal house, the Śākya, thus claiming that "there was an unbreakable bond between Buddhism and the Sinhalese ethnic group."⁴⁴

In other words, the distinctiveness of Dharmapāla's Buddhist nationalism lies in his defining the ethnic identity of the Sinhalese through a religious and racial philosophy of chosenness, which equated the descendants of the lion with the Aryan race, with Buddhists, and with the Sinhalese.

For his part, Tanaka also nationalistically defined the ethnic identity of the Japanese as "a nation with a heaven-sent mission" for the moral unification of

⁴² Disanayaka 1993, Shibuya 1998, and Kawashima 2006.

⁴³ Shibuya 1998, p. 206.

⁴⁴ Disanayaka 1993, p. 70.

the world on the basis of a Buddhist theory of the Japanese national essence (*kokutai* 国体) which linked the mythical foundation of the Japanese nation in the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (Chronicles of Japan) with the *Hokekyō* 法華經 (hereafter, *Lotus Sutra*; the scripture most fundamental to the Nichiren sect) through his own unique interpretation.⁴⁵

In “*Kōsō no kenkoku to honke no daikyō*” 皇宗の建国と本化の大教 (The Founding of the Nation by the Imperial Ancestors and the Great Teaching of the Disciple of the Primordial Buddha, which refers to the founding of the imperial nation and the religion of Nichiren; November 1903), the lecture that formed the basis for *Sekai tōitsu no tengyō* (1904), Tanaka states:

Nichirenism is none other than Japanism. Nichiren Shōnin manifested in the world to make a doctrinal explication of Japan’s spiritual national essence, and to offer all of humanity for all of time during this era of the Final Dharma a conclusive refuge. The great teaching of the disciple of the primordial Buddha is thus none other than the religion of the Japanese nation, and the religion of the Japanese nation is none other than the religion for the world.⁴⁶

Here Tanaka declares that Nichiren Buddhism ought to be the national religion of Japan, and that it is also a religion for the world. In addition, here he equates Nichiren Buddhism with the Japanese national essence, stating that this national essence has global applicability because it is founded upon Nichiren Buddhism.

Next, referring to the situation of the time—the imperialist great powers and their domination of their colonies, and the rivalry between Japan and Russia—Tanaka draws a distinction between “the moral unification of the world” and “the aggressive unification of the world.” In particular, he criticizes the expansion of Russian territory as the latter, “unification of the world through the avarice of the state.” It is Nichirenism and the theory of the national essence that guarantee the moral unification of the world. In other words, in order to rationalize Japanese nationalism, Tanaka adduced a Nichirenist theory of the national essence.

Tanaka held that the original agent of this “moral unification” was Japan’s first emperor, Jinmu Tennō. He explained the grounds for this unification of the world by going back to the *Nihon shoki*. At that point, he positioned the imperial house within the lineage of the Indian wheel-

⁴⁵ See “*Nichi-Ro sensō no eikyō*” 日露戦争の影響, chapter 3 of Ōtani 2001.

⁴⁶ Tanaka 1904, p. 5.

turning kings, “the royal house which since great antiquity has unified the world” (as I have previously explained, here he was influenced by Dharmapāla), and the Japanese as the people bearing the heaven-sent mission of the unification of the world. In *Sekai tōitsu no tengyō*, Tanaka criticizes the “Christian civilization,” “Caucasianism,” and “Imperialism” of Russia and Germany, as well as the discussion of the “yellow peril” in the West at that time. One can find elements of a racialist perspective in these criticisms of the West.

It should be kept in mind that Tanaka’s Buddhist nationalism took shape at the start of the twentieth century, during the period of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). This was precisely the period in which nationalist consciousness was gaining force among people within the Japanese nation, and also the time when the “yellow peril” was being discussed in the West. Tanaka’s Buddhist nationalism was constructed in tandem with the rise of this domestic sense of nationalism and the idea of the “yellow peril” abroad. His thought was rooted in anti-Western racialism. Japan achieved victory in this war, a victory which in turn affected the formation of Dharmapāla’s Buddhist nationalism. I should like to point out that mutual influence of this kind is evident in the Buddhist nationalism of each party.

Linking Buddhism with Nationalism

Why was Buddhism, with its universalism, linked to nationalism, which is the particularist ideology of the ethnic state? Here I would like to consider the “three paradoxes” proposed in Benedict Anderson’s classic study of nationalism, *Imagined Communities*.⁴⁷ The three paradoxes are as follows: First, although the nation, in its ethnic and civil senses, appears to the objective eye of the historian as a phenomenon of modernity, it appears to the subjective eye of the nationalist as existing from time immemorial. Second, although nationality as a sociocultural concept has a formal universal quality, it manifests as something specific in each case. Third, in spite of the vast political influence possessed by nationalism, it is philosophically impoverished and incoherent.

The intellectual modes of Dharmapāla and Tanaka, who stressed the ancient traditions of the “Sinhalese” and the “people with the heaven-sent task,” based on the founding mythologies of each of their nations, are clearly modern phenomena. Through their encounter with the West, both Sri Lanka

⁴⁷ Anderson 1991, p. 5. A Japanese translation is available at Shiraishi and Shiraishi 1997, pp. 22–23.

and Japan were forced to join in the modern global system and to build modern nation states anew. Further, when nationality, with its formal universality, appeared as particular, specific communities in these new states, that ethnic identity was made significant by harking back to ancient tradition (an invented tradition). That is, the pre-modern narratives of the “Sinhalese” and the “people with the heaven-sent task” were employed to insure the historical continuity of each of their groups’ identities. By employing these narratives, both Dharmapāla and Tanaka sought to elevate a sense of ethnic unity. At the same time, I argue, Buddhism was invoked in order to impart to that tradition a universal quality that transcended particularism. In other words, the cultural resource that allowed Sinhalese nationalism and Japanese nationalism to universalize their particularism was Buddhism. Further, the philosophical poverty of Sinhalese nationalism and Japanese nationalism could be compensated for through Sinhalese Buddhism and Nichirenism. However, here we must stress that the apparent universalism of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism and Nichirenist nationalism is actually an ersatz universalism. We must also pay attention to the fact that their exclusivism and ethnocentrism exerted influence on the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and the formation of the notion of the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere” in Japan.

In the preceding section, I have shown that the encounter and conversation between Buddhist nationalists of South Asia and East Asia on 23 June 1902 was one facet of the process of formation of the notion of Buddhist nationalism in Asia. In the sympathy and mutual influence between two men, who had each been engaged with Buddhist reform movements since the 1880s, and who in the 1900s were each building up his own form of Buddhist nationalist thought, lies the historical significance of their encounter.

CONCLUSION

Finally, I would like to consider the relationship between Protestant Buddhism and Buddhist nationalism, and the distinctive character of Buddhist reform movements in Asia.

Concerning the relationship between Buddhism and nationalism, Sugimoto Yoshio, keeping in mind the case of Sri Lanka, has made the following observation:

For a newly arisen elite affected by its colonial ruler to awaken to its own traditions and for those to become the center of nationalism are not phenomena limited to Sri Lanka. . . . What draws

our attention in the case of religion is that, in order to oppose the domination of the West, which is to say, the domination of Christianity, there occurs the phenomenon of the return to one's own tradition. What's more, here the return to tradition is no mere return to the past, but something directed by the elite classes, designed to oppose Christianity, yet deeply affected by it as well. This tendency to "resemble the enemy" may well even be deemed the destiny of nationalism in former colonies.⁴⁸

Here, the facts that the colonial opposition of the Buddhist revival against Christianity occurs with the rise of nationalism, and that this return to tradition takes place in the idiom of Protestantism, are presciently analyzed. That is to say, Sugimoto suggests that the concept of Protestant Buddhism retains its validity even when we analyze Buddhist nationalism. Unlike Sri Lanka, Japan was not colonized, but protests against the West, against Christianity, and against traditional Buddhism are Protestant influences evident in the modern Buddhism of Japan.

However, the work of Gombrich and Obeyesekere that uses the concept of Protestant Buddhism posits a polar relationship between Asia and the West. This concept is appropriate for analyzing the nature of the influence of Western Protestantism and colonialism on the development of modern Buddhism (and Buddhist nationalism) in the countries of Asia. However, when we consider the historical fact that Japan colonized Korea and Taiwan, and Japanese Buddhist institutions participated in colonial policies, it becomes necessary to postulate a more complex relationship than simply the duality of Asia and the West. That is, the question becomes how should we employ the concept of Protestant Buddhism when teasing out the complex relationships such as those between the West, Japan, and Asia in this period. This issue remains to be resolved.

(Translated by Micah Auerback)

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