

ARTICLES

FEATURE: MODERNITY AND BUDDHISM

Guest Editor's Preface

HAYASHI MAKOTO

ABOUT twenty years ago, Ikeda Eishun 池田英俊, a colleague of mine who was working at the same university, asked me if I would help him start a research association for the study of modern Buddhism. I can remember answering, "I will be happy to help, but I doubt that this association will last more than five years, since there are not any scholars who focus on modern Buddhism other than you, Professor Ikeda." He remembered this statement of mine, and about seven or eight years after the Japanese Association for the Study of Modern Buddhist History was established, he said happily to me, "Your prophecy was off the mark. This research association is still functioning." It is quite true that my reading was off. The association has just had its twentieth anniversary, and its journal, *Kindai bukkyō* 近代仏教, has published its nineteenth volume. But it does not stop there. The Japanese Association for Religious Studies, the Japanese Society for Intellectual History, the Association for the Study of "Religion and Society" have all held panels and presentations dealing with modern Buddhism, and many young scholars are ambitiously presenting the results of their work in these and other venues. People have even said that "the study of modern Buddhism is booming," and I must say that this is not necessarily an overstatement.

So what has happened in these past twenty years? If we turn the clock back twenty years to when Ikeda founded the association for the study of modern Buddhism, only a few scholars joined and their interests lay primarily in the Buddhism of the medieval and pre-modern periods. Yoshida Kyūichi 吉田久一 and Kashiwahara Yūsen 柏原祐泉 were invited to the first conference, where they gave lectures that showed the results of their long

careers of study. These two authorities, who had served as the central figures in the field of research into modern Buddhism, were not just pleased at the creation of this new association, they were also surprised by it. These two were both very aware of the fact that this field was still a minor one. Around the same time, the theory of the *kenmitsu taisei* 顕密体制 laid forth by Kuroda Toshio 黒田俊雄 was making a major impact in the field of the history of Buddhism in the medieval period. This theory drew many young scholars to the field, making it one of the most active areas of study at the time. Also, in the realm of early modern religious history, research by Takano Toshihiko 高埜利彦 on the complex relationship between the Edo 江戸 Shogunate and the imperial court appeared and was beginning to draw the interest of scholars. If we turn our attention to the field of religious studies, this was an age when much work was being done on New Religions. However, the interest in this field quickly withered away in the wake of the Aum Shinrikyō オウム真理教 incident of 1995. This incident served as a catalyst causing researchers to question the social stance of scholars of religion and how they should relate to the problems of religiously motivated violence and cults. As research on medieval Buddhism developed in light of Kuroda's theory and work in the history of pre-modern Buddhism was spurred on by Takano's ideas, and really as an extension of those developments, it became necessary to ask what was happening with Buddhism in the modern period, especially about how research into Buddhist history was conducted in that period. With the appearance of Kuroda's theory, a view of Japanese Buddhist history that gave prominence to the schools of new Kamakura Buddhism ceased to be possible, and that led scholars to question why such a view of Buddhist history became popular in the modern period. To assert this more boldly, scholars of modern Buddhism faced the responsibility of responding to scholars of medieval Buddhism and explaining why the thought that Buddhist history in Japan was centered on new Kamakura Buddhism had arisen in the modern period. When the problem is considered in this way, it becomes possible to say that the histories of the Buddhism of the ancient, medieval, and pre-modern periods are actually all, to a certain extent, products of the modern period. One cannot deny that the images of figures such as Shōtoku Taishi 聖徳太子 (574–622) and Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262) have been built upon cumulative results of the research of modern historians, Buddhologists, and intellectuals, and are thus products of modernity. Our understandings of Shōtoku Taishi and Shinran are truly historical images born of the academic knowledge created by modern Buddhism. I believe that research on modern

Buddhism has both the opportunity and the responsibility to reflectively reevaluate the history of Buddhism in the ancient, medieval, and pre-modern periods. Becoming conscious of this privilege and responsibility particular to the field of modern Buddhist history made it possible to open a new page in the study of this subject.

Let me add here that the study of modern Buddhism has developed remarkably inside Japan since we entered the twenty-first century. I would like to consider this progress from three perspectives below.

First, monographs have been published one after another. To list up just a few of the many books and articles that have been published on the subject, one can point to *Kindai Nihon no nichiren shugi undō* 近代日本の日蓮主義運動 (2001) by Ōtani Eiichi 大谷栄一; Brian Victoria's *Zen to sensō* 禅と戦争 (2001, originally published as *Zen at War* in 1998); *Amerika bukkyō no tanjō* アメリカ仏教の誕生 (2001) by Moriya Tomoe 守屋友江; *Shinmatsu bukkyō no kenkyū* 清末仏教の研究 (2003) by Chen Jidong 陳継東; *Shisō shi toshite no 'seishin shugi'* 思想史としての「精神主義」(2003) by Fukushima Eiju 福島栄寿; *Kindai Nihon no shisō, saikō* 近代日本の思想・再考, vols. 1 and 2 (2004), by Sueki Fumihiko 末木文美士; Ranjana Mukhopadhyaya's *Nihon no shakai sankā bukkyō* 日本の社会参加仏教 (2005); James Ketelaar's *Jakyō/junkyō no Meiji* 邪教/殉教の明治 (2006, originally published as *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution* in 1990); *Shokuminchi ki manshū no shūkyō* 植民地期満州の宗教 (2007), edited by Kiba Akeshi 木場明志 and Cheng Shuwei 程舒偉; *Meiji zenki no kyōiku, kyōka, bukkyō* 明治前期の教育・教化・仏教 (2008) by Tanigawa Yutaka 谷川穰; *Kikan Nihon shisō shi: Kindai bukkyō* 季刊日本思想史 近代仏教 (2009), edited by Ōtani Eiichi and myself; *Kindai Nihon no bukkyōsha* 近代日本の仏教者 (2010), edited by Ogawara Masamichi 小川原正道; *'Seishin shugi' wa dare no shisō ka* 「精神主義」は誰の思想か (2011) by Yamamoto Nobuhiro 山本伸裕; *Kindai kokka to bukkyō* 近代国家と仏教, vol. 14 of *Shin Ajia bukkyō shi* 新アジア仏教史 (2011), edited by Sueki Fumihiko; Ōtani Eiichi's *Kindai bukkyō to iu shiza* 近代仏教という視座 (2012); Orion Klautau's *Kindai Nihon shisō toshite no bukkyō shigaku* 近代日本思想としての仏教史学 (2012). This list is but a sampling, which forces us to wonder why so many books have been published on the subject of modern Buddhism—why has such a renaissance occurred in this field? Most of this research has been preformed by scholars in the fields of religious studies, sociology, and Japanese history. Only a few have been contributions by scholars of Buddhist studies at denominational universities. Most of the scholars who are publishing in this field are generally more

interested in the issue of modernity than in Buddhism, itself. That trend is particularly prevalent among historians and sociologists, many of whom are attempting to reevaluate modernity through reference to Buddhism.

Secondly, as can be seen in the works by Ketelaar, Ōtani, and Klautau, there has been a “semantic shift,” where increasing attention is being given to the issue of discourse. Ketelaar’s depiction of the transformation of the self-image held by modern Buddhists from heretic to martyr and then onto cosmopolitan was stimulating for Japanese readers. Ōtani conducts a careful analysis of historiography, laying out the way the subject has been treated in previous research, indicates the degree to which a modernist perspective attenuates an understanding of modern Buddhism, and suggests the development of an integrative viewpoint in order to overcome the narrowness of the modernist understanding. Klautau takes up the idea that the Buddhism of pre-modern Japan was degenerate, which was a prevalent feature of the modern understanding of Buddhist history, but rather than addressing the question of whether the Buddhism of the Edo period was really degenerate, he instead problematizes the discourse of the modern Buddhist who wanted to describe pre-modern Buddhism in that way, thereby taking the discourse of historians of Buddhism as an object of historical study. The issues addressed by Ōtani and Klautau are also present in the problem of the development of the concept of *shūkyō* 宗教 (religion), and have the capacity to connect to a reconsideration of the discourse of knowledge in modernity.

Thirdly, in terms of both researchers and their subject matter, transnational exchange is increasing. This exchange was not present in the days of Yoshida, Kashiwahara, and Ikeda (although I should note that one can point to Ketelaar, a student of Ikeda’s, as an exception). Victoria’s and Ketelaar’s works are translations, and Chen, Mukhopadhyaya, and Klautau have published their research in Japanese, not their native tongues. Although Japanese Buddhism was once the main focus of interest, the Buddhism of China, Korea, and the United States is being taken up as the object of more and more research.

So I have introduced the state of the field since we have entered this century, and we can see that a very lively, even chaotic, atmosphere is developing. The current feature reflects these changes in the field in the past decade. It consists of papers that were originally presented at an international symposium held at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Kokusai Nihon Bunka Kenyū Sentā 国際日本文化研究センター) on 13 and 14 October 2011. This symposium did not happen spontaneously, but instead has a collaborative research project undertaken under the direction of Sueki Fumi-

hiko entitled “The Pre-modern and Modern Seen from Buddhism” (*bukkyō kara mita zenkindai to kindai* 仏教からみた前近代と近代) in its background. In that project, scholars with an interest in modern Buddhism gathered to make presentations and discuss their individual research. After that research project ended, meetings were held to prepare for the international symposium, where we spent much time considering and discussing the major works of the scholars who would present at the symposium, which was held after this long process of preparation. Although it began in a tense atmosphere, over the course of the two days many lively discussions occurred, and it turned out to be a very dense conference. The program was as follows.

Day One

Explanation of Objectives “Modernity and Buddhism,” by Sueki Fumihiko

Session One “Formation of Modern Buddhism,” chaired by Hayashi Makoto
 “Burnouf and the Birth of Buddhist Studies,” by Donald S. Lopez
 “Tracing Modernity’s Flows,” by Thomas A. Tweed
 “The Other as Reflected in Sino-Japanese Buddhism,” by Chen Jidong
 Responses by Silvio Vita and Okada Masahiko 岡田正彦

Session Two “Modernization of Japanese Buddhism,” chaired by Ōtani Eiichi
 “Japan’s Contribution to Modern Global Buddhism,” by Judith M. Snodgrass
 “After Olcott Left,” by Yoshinaga Shin’ichi 吉永進一
 “General Education and the Modernization of Japanese Buddhism,” by Hayashi Makoto
 Responses by Galen Amstutz and Orion Klautau

Day Two

Session Three “Modern Buddhism in Asia,” chaired by Yoshinaga Shin’ichi
 “A Comparative Analysis of Buddhist Nationalism in Asia,” by Ōtani Eiichi
 “The Modernity of Japanese Buddhism and Colonial Korea,” by Je Jum-suk 諸点淑
 “The Enchanted Secular,” by David L. McMahan
 Responses by Micah Auerback and Kim Taehoon 金泰勲

Session Four “General Discussion,” chaired by Sueki Fumihiko with Shimoda Masahiro 下田正弘 as discussant

The feature below contains the papers presented at this international symposium. I believe that this may be the first time that so many scholars focusing on modern Buddhism have come together in one place. Each of the scholars who was invited made original presentations based on materials in their respective areas of interest. The papers by Lopez on the development of Buddhist studies in Europe, Tweed and Snodgrass on the exchange between Japan and the United States and the birth of Buddhism in America, Je's piece on Buddhism in colonial Korea, and McMahan's work on the currency of American Buddhism all provided a fresh viewpoint and new information to the researchers working in the Japanese language, who have mostly considered the problem of modern Buddhism based on events and people in Japan. I would like to imagine that the presentations by the scholars working in Japanese were stimulating for those who came from overseas, but perhaps more than anything else, I believe that the most significant gain for all the participants was the realization that, regardless of nationality, everyone is examining their research materials with a similar sense of the issues at hand and all hold a variety of themes in common, such as Buddhist studies, Theosophy, the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, colonialism, nationalism, and the definition of modernity, among others. Since modern Buddhism grew out of transnational interaction, it seems that scholars who study this subject are destined to get caught up in transnational situations. I hope that the latest results of research in the field of modern Buddhism collected here in this issue do not simply end in the self-satisfaction of the authors, but that they serve to provide a new viewpoint and have an impact on a wide range of readers.

Lastly, I would like to thank Michael Conway and Nitta Tomomichi 新田智通 of the Eastern Buddhist Society for participating in the symposium and in the planning of this feature.