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No Separation, No Clashes: An Aspect of Buddhism and Education in the Meiji Period

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THIS PAPER DISCUSSES the connections which existed in the period of the development of modern society in Japan between the school education system put forward by the state, and Buddhism, which up until the time of the Tokugawa period (1603–1868) had held a substantial role in society.

We may consider the coordination of links between state-run education and religion as a significant issue with which the modern state had come to be engaged. However, there is not yet sufficient research on that issue and its effects on modern Japan. This is the case for a number of reasons. One reason is that, because in the Tokugawa period the hegemony of Buddhist religious groups in education was not contested by the shogunate, there has been a sense that in pre-modern times this issue was not controversial. There is also, among other reasons, the tendency among scholars of education and historians in postwar Japan to have a conscience about the strong affiliation of education and State Shinto and avoid researching the connections between education and religion.

For these reasons a great deal of the previous research in this area has been limited to the formation of institutions for the education and training of clerics¹ and examples of Buddhist-affiliated private schools founded by the various sects. A small number of significant research papers put forward

¹ Translator's note: Although the English word "monk," with its connotations of seclusion from secular society and adherence to monastic discipline, does not perfectly reflect the meaning of the Japanese word *sōryo* 僧侶, which refers more broadly to ordained members of the Buddhist clergy, for the sake of simplicity of expression and to distinguish from Shinto priests, I have used "monk" to translate this term throughout this article.

a range of viewpoints on the wider connections between education and religion. For example Shimazono Susumu understood schools as “churches” (*kyōkai* 教会) propagating the Imperial Rescript on Education (*Kyōiku chokugo* 教育勅語).² Satō Hideo referred to links between Buddhism and education, such as the photographic portraits of the emperor distributed to schools by the state being called *goshin'ei* 御真影, just as the portraits of the *shūso* 宗祖 (“sect founders”) of Buddhist sects.³ Yamaguchi Teruomi, touching on the Meiji government’s supervision of Christianity, protection of Shinto and tolerance of Buddhism, pointed to school education having played a role with regard to moral standards which religion could not take up.⁴ In this way, a “Japanese style separation of church and state” in the field of education has frequently been implied. The research on the modern concepts of “religion” and “education” (and on the academic knowledge based upon them) which has flourished in recent years tends to depict the two as having separated without any problems.

However, did the course of history really run so smoothly? My thought would be that it did not. In the early part of the Meiji period, in which the modern Japanese education system was launched (around 1872–1890), two key aspects of education and Buddhism were apparent. One implied their separation after discord; the other implied that they might not separate, and might together sink their roots deep into society. There were two important concerns with regard to this situation. One relates to the connection between proselytization (*kyōka* 教化)⁵ of the general populace as practiced by those enlisted as “doctrinal instructors” (*kyōdōshoku* 教導職)⁶ in the early

² Shimazono 2001.

³ Satō 1994.

⁴ Yamaguchi 1999.

⁵ Translator’s note: The Japanese word *kyōka* (also read as *kyōke* in specifically Buddhist contexts) is here translated as “proselytization” to emphasize the aspect of the spreading of state doctrine—especially in the context of the “Great Promulgation Campaign” (*Taikyō senpu undō* 大教宣布運動) of the early Meiji period—within the activities of morality instructors in particular, as opposed to the aspect of diffusion of “education” and “enlightenment” *per se*.

⁶ In the eighth month of the fourth year of Meiji (1871), the “Department of Kami Affairs” (*Jingikan* 神祇官) was demoted to the status of a ministry. It was abolished in the third month of the following year, and then reconstituted into the “Ministry of Doctrine” (*Kyōbushō* 教部省). The latter, whose central institution was the *Daikyōin* 大教院 (“Great Teaching Institute”), put forward a nationwide proselytization campaign. In this context, from 1872 all Buddhist monks and Shinto priests were appointed to the position of *kyōdōshoku* 教導職 (“doctrinal instructors”), thus becoming bearers of the state responsibility for proselytizing to the general populace.

years of Meiji, and education (*kyōiku* 教育). Both the national school education program and the enlistment of Buddhist and Shinto clergy as doctrinal instructors started at the same time, parallel to one another, without any clear distinction of roles or intended beneficiaries. This, therefore, led to unforeseen disputes in various regions regarding teaching personnel and teaching content. With these disputes as the starting point, Buddhist monks grew aware of areas of overlap between education and Buddhism. While moving toward the separation of the two as a result of this awareness, it became apparent that there were areas in which a state of “no separation” continued. Another important concern was the connection between education and Buddhist religious organizations from the end of the 1870s until the 1890s. In this second area also, Buddhism experienced the process of attempting to play a significant role in education, and consequently separating from it. Furthermore, in the debate which emerged in the 1890s as to whether or not the various religions had a role within state education, Buddhist monks on the whole, in contrast to Christianity, went forward with a position of “no clashes” with education. This however might be considered an attempt, though in subtle form, to maintain aspects of “no separation” of Buddhism and education.

If we look at the way in which Buddhism faced state education policies, its fluctuation between proximity and separation becomes apparent with regard to several factors which arose in modern Japan. So perhaps we should understand the connection between Buddhism and education in the contemporary period as stemming from within this fluctuation. This would serve, moreover, to prevent us from passing over as complete outsiders the issues of education and religion which arise throughout the world.

I wish therefore to look at the connection between Buddhism and education, identifying periods in its development with the two key aspects described above as my main focus. In so doing I will direct my attention to overlaps of persons, place, educational content and the degrees thereof, discussing the issue of where there is clear separation of Buddhism and education and where there is not.

BUDDHISM IN THE PERIOD OF ESTABLISHING EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND REGULATIONS

Friction 1872–1875

First of all I would like to draw attention to the starting point of a dispute in 1872 (the fifth year of Meiji). In that year the Ministry of Doctrine, now responsible for religious affairs, instituted a system by which all

Shinto priests and Buddhist monks were made doctrinal instructors, and all shrines and temples were made into *shōkyōin* 小教院 (local branches of the Daikyōin, see note 5, above) to enlighten the people in morality, humanity and the legitimacy of the new government with the emperor at its head.

All Buddhist monks were incorporated into the system regardless of their sect. As morality instructors, they were not to teach Buddhist doctrine to the local populace but were ordered to teach the Shinto-oriented virtue of “reverence for the gods and love of the country.” Meanwhile, in the same year, 1872, the Ministry of Education (Monbushō 文部省) promulgated the Fundamental Code of Education (*gakusei* 学制), which was the first legal basis of modern school education. Though there are various theories as to who drafted these ordinances and which systems were referred to for guidance, the view that the French system was used as a reference point is compelling.

The Ministry of Education had from the previous year conducted a survey of European and American education systems. The original drafting for the Fundamental Code of Education, according to this theory, centered around Mitsukuri Rinshō 箕作麟祥 (1846–1897), one of the official surveyors of the western school systems. Having himself studied in France, he took the French system as his model. As a result, a national public education system was decided upon, which divided the country into school districts (eight university districts each divided into thirty-two middle school districts which in turn were each divided into 210 elementary school districts⁷), founded universities, middle schools and elementary schools (over twenty thousand schools) and stated that school-age children must all be sent to school.

At the time of these two policies, there was not necessarily any awareness of a clear difference in the parties they concerned. For example, the official title of regular teaching staff in schools (*kundō* 訓導) was exactly the same as that of low-ranking doctrinal instructors. Also, where the establishment of schools did not progress smoothly in a certain region, a *shōkyōin* school based in a temple or shrine was provided as an alternative measure. Apparently the government officials drawing up these systems did not feel it quite necessary to make sharp divisions and avoid overlap between the two. This being the case, it was quite natural for the Ministry of Doctrine in March 1873 to add the regulations for priests’ and monks’ schools (*shinkan sōryo gakkō* 神官僧侶学校) to the Fundamental Code of Education. These

⁷ In April of the following year, 1873, the Ministry of Education Directive Number 42 revised the number of university districts to seven, and accordingly the middle school districts and elementary school districts were reorganized to the respective totals of 239 and 42,451.

regulations sanctioned the founding of elementary schools by doctrinal instructors and the inclusion of proselytization activities within the curriculum. Then in June of the same year the Ministry of Doctrine sent out a memorandum stating that monks who had become doctrinal instructors were permitted to combine preaching of the doctrines of their own sect with that of Shinto-oriented virtues. With these two regulations in effect, bringing religion (Buddhism) into the schools had become legally possible.

With the return to Japan that same year of Ministry of Education bureaucrat Tanaka Fujimaro 田中不二麿 (1845–1909) from the Iwakura Mission to Europe, the principle of the “separation of religion and education” that he had discovered during his tour of Europe and America was put into practice by the Ministry of Education, which proceeded to isolate education from religious indoctrination. First of all, a policy was put into effect in August of 1873 which prohibited Buddhist monks from serving as school teaching staff; the reason given was that they were religious professionals in the same manner as Christian missionaries.⁸ Next, in September, the regulations for priests’ and monks’ schools were nullified, which suggests a position was taken in support of banning the use of indoctrinating or proselytizing content in the schools. Furthermore, in May 1874:

The purpose of an educational institution (*kyōin* 教院) [i.e., a shrine or temple used as such] is, along with the cultivation of doctrinal instructors, to preach sermons to the parishioners so that they might not become dissolute and ignorant. They are places in which the sending of children of school age to elementary school is promoted. However, it is a great inconvenience that there are those who think shrines and temples used as educational institutions are the same as regular schools. Thus, do not fail to make a clear distinction [between these institutions and] schools under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education.⁹

Notification that school buildings were not to be used as places of preaching and that the two places were not to be confused was also circulated, reinforcing a rigorous spatial differentiation between schools and religious

⁸ See *Kōbunroku* 公文録, “Monbushō ukagai” 文部省伺 of July 1874 (Meiji 6), “Report to the effect that western missionaries should not be employed as school teaching staff with an inquiry concerning the principle that morality instructors should not be employed as school teaching staff” (*Seikyō dengyōshi o kyōshi ni yatoi irezaru gi jōshin narabi ni kyōdōshoku o gakkō kyōshi ni fusaiyō no gi ukagai* 西教伝教士を教師に雇入ざる儀上申并教導職を学校教師に不採用儀伺).

⁹ Naikaku Kanpōkyoku 1887, p. 1219.

institutions. At that time it was very common for villages which could not construct new school buildings due to lack of funds to assign temples, including disused temples, to that purpose (for example, in the case of Tokyo and its surrounding areas in 1875, eighty percent of the school buildings in Chiba Prefecture were borrowed temples, as were eighty-two percent of those in Yamanashi Prefecture and eighty-five percent of those in Saitama Prefecture). This being the case, problems arose because temples that were used as places of preaching had been compulsorily put to use as schoolhouses. Thus the clear move toward the rigorous differentiation of “place” was a welcome event to the Buddhists who wished to protect their own temples.

In this way, education and proselytization (or, more specifically, Buddhism) were intermingled, which came to be viewed as a problem, and then they were separated across the three key areas of place, persons and content. However, as a shortage of teaching staff was a nationwide problem, it was necessary for doctrinal instructors to continue serving as teaching staff. Accordingly, petitions from prefectures requesting that doctrinal instructors might also serve concurrently as teaching staff appeared one after another. The Ministry of Education had little choice but to accept them. Considering this point, we might conclude that the school education system of modern Japan was able to take its first steps because of the availability of the spatial resource of temples and the human resource of Buddhist monks.

Separation 1875–1885

In May 1875, meeting with the opposition of the Jōdo Shinshū Honganji branch monk Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 (1838–1911) and others, the Ministry of Doctrine’s policy for the indoctrination of the public had stalled before it could produce any significant results. From then on, the various Buddhist religious organizations began to make provisions for their organizational structures and institutions for the training and cultivation of monks. In 1877 the Ministry of Doctrine was reorganized as the Bureau of Shrines and Temples (*shajikyoku* 社寺局) under the authority of the Home Ministry (Naimushō 内務省). The *kyōdōshoku* system was abolished in 1884. Thus the various religious organizations expanded their autonomy, at least in terms of outward appearances, having set a certain distance between themselves and the supervising authority of the state. Meanwhile in educational administration, debates on the future course of public education arose between Motoda Nagazane 元田永孚 (1818–1891) who favored Confucian-based moral education and Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841–1909) who favored Enlightenment-style intellectual training, spurred by his writing of a piece

entitled “Discussion on Education” (“Kyōikugui” 教育議) in response to the ideas set forth by Motoda in an official document. Around the same time, the Ministry of Education appointed the American David Murray (1830–1905) as an education policy adviser and in 1879 abolished the Fundamental Code of Education and promulgated the Education Order (*kyōikurei* 教育令), which was based on the concept of state autonomy applied in the United States. This was an attempt to encourage the voluntary acceptance of the education system taking into account the actual circumstances of a region as opposed to being compelled to do so by the central government. However, policy changed again the following year and the Revised Education Order was put forth. This revision demonstrated a move toward setting moral training (*shūshin* 修身) as the school subject of greatest priority, along with a centralization of power to the government, the Ministry of Education and prefectures. Furthermore, though the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement (*jiyū minken undō* 自由民権運動) had spread energetically throughout the country, school teaching staff were, via the Regulations for Elementary School Teachers of 1881, put under strict supervision with regard to remarks concerning politics or religion.

Let us consider the factors reflecting a move toward “separation” of education and religion in the three developments introduced immediately above. First of all we must consider “persons”—the teaching staff. In November 1879 the Ministry of Education, bowing to circumstances, lifted the ban on morality teachers serving concurrently as teaching staff. This may be considered only natural given the increasing shortage of professional teachers. Did the Buddhist monks welcome this as a widening of their means to spread their religion? No they did not. There was next to no interest shown in the pages of the *Meikyō shinshi* 明教新誌, a Buddhist-affiliated magazine published on alternate days, nor indeed across the newspapers and magazines in general. On the other hand, the utility value of priests and monks serving concurrently as doctrinal instructors and school teaching staff was observed by local government officials. For example, in Iwate and Shizuoka Prefectures, opinions were expressed along the lines of: “We can get teachers at [the price of] a small allowance,” “[They are] effective in the promotion of school attendance” and “We can count on them to take responsibility for moral education.”¹⁰

¹⁰ For example, in a written proposal submitted to the Ministry of Education, the Head of Educational Affairs in Iwate Prefecture, Hirakawa Yasushi 平川靖 (n.d.), lists various merits of stepping up the participation of morality teachers (Shinto priests and Buddhist monks) in

Next, regarding considerations of “place,” the separation and distinction between temple and school buildings progressed, even as projects for the restoration of derelict temples and the construction of new school buildings were undertaken. The various Buddhist religious organizations, in view of the compulsory reassignment of temples for use as schoolhouses and the introduction of western learning, tended to take school education as a symbol of anti-Buddhist trends. They put their energies into the provision of facilities for the training of monks, and worked wholeheartedly to secure an elite reserve of educated monks for their sect.

Considering the issue of the “content” of education, we may note that Buddhist books were almost never used as textbooks in moral education classes (*shūshinka* 修身科). This was in spite of the lack of a system of official approval for textbooks and ample leeway for teachers to use any textbook they wished. In the 1881 Ministry of Education guidelines for the compilation of elementary school moral education textbooks, Confucian teachings were recommended for the purposes of moral education. Regarding Buddhism, the following statement was made:

Buddhism has for a long time circulated among the people and largely caused the popular mind to be infected, being commonly but the beliefs of the lower social orders. Though in terms of population and the places to which it has spread Buddhism would have a claim to the higher number of believers, one can but remark that Confucianism is the greater in terms of influence.¹¹

This kind of reason was used to assert the superiority of Confucianism regarding textbook content. Buddhism being used in moral instruction in schools came to be yet more thoroughly dismissed in the course of the “Discussion on Education” debates between Itō and Motoda mentioned above.

The government and Ministry of Education had from the start displayed no precise attitude toward schools affiliated to religions including Christianity and tended to leave such matters to those responsible in the

education. These merits include that expenditure might be reduced by converting shrines and temples into schoolhouses, that Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism might be taught, that salaries might be reduced, that monks and priests were superior to teaching staff who had rapidly completed intensive training at a teacher training school, and that attending school at the parish temple of which one is a supporter would facilitate efforts to encourage school attendance. See *Meikyō shinshi*, no. 929 (24 January 1880, pp. 7–8) and no. 930 (26 January 1880, pp. 6–8).

¹¹ This was enacted in December 1881 and distributed to the prefectures the following year. See Kurasawa 1965, p. 1044.

region concerned. In April 1884 Minister of Education Ōki Takatō 大木喬任 (1832–1899) received a petition for the establishment of Christian-affiliated schools in various regions and inquired of the Grand Minister Sanjō Sanetomi 三条実美 (1837–1891) as follows:

Though among religions Christianity (*yasoshū* 耶蘇宗) may have a position of tacit sufferance, they have yet to receive clear sanction. Irrespective of this, I would as a matter of urgency have your instructions . . . as to the question of whether they should receive clear license with regard to [the teaching of moral] education in the aforementioned religiously affiliated schools and also regarding whether the other religions ought to receive similar permission.¹²

Sanjō replied to Ōki's inquiry by stating that it would be well to leave such matters to the discretion of regional officials. If the propagation of Christianity were to be banned, there was a danger that this might give rise to an international problem which would be a setback to the revision of the unequal treaties which Japan was striving for. Having said that, if the government had granted such permission, it would have represented a straightforward approval of the propagation of Christianity and thus a major change in the state policy pursued until that time. Perhaps Sanjō wished to avoid problems of this kind and thus left things to the discretion of regional officials. There were also instructions given at that time stating that the Ministry of Education need not participate in the supervision of Buddhist-affiliated schools, a matter which might well be left to the head temples. It would seem, perhaps, that the government adopted a posture of having few concerns with the connections between Buddhism, religion and education.

From the period described in the previous section of this article, which was characterized by friction between education and religion, we have identified three aspects—persons, place and content—which were to be the foci for the separation of education and religion. In the period analyzed in the present section, we saw that it seemed that separation occurred not so much in terms of persons but in relation to place and content. Despite the disinterest of the upper echelons of the religious organizations and the government's non-participation in religion-affiliated education, we can say that Buddhism participated in public education through monks serving concurrently as school teachers.

¹² This was a letter from Ōki Takatō addressed to Sanjō Sanetomi dated 10 April 1884. See *Makino Nobuaki kankei monjo* 牧野伸顯関係文書, 227, held at the National Diet Library Room of Modern Japanese Political History Materials (Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Kensei Shiryōshitsu 国立国会図書館憲政資料室).

BUDDHISM DURING THE PERIOD OF THE PRESCRIPTION OF SCHOOLS ORDINANCES¹³

Sudden proximity 1886–1890

The state of separation between education and religion changed to one in which Buddhism would experience a sudden proximity with education between 1886 and 1890. Toward the end of 1885 Mori Arinori 森有礼 (1847–1889) took up his post as the nation's first Minister of Education; in the following year the First Elementary Schools Ordinance was promulgated by decree of the emperor. With a view to making improvements in school attendance rates and the rationalization of education costs, this ordinance provided for a simplified elementary school curriculum aimed at the children of impoverished households which was basically free of charge. In terms of education law, this is understood to represent a shift toward a more centralizing, nationalist pattern similar to the German style. It also overlapped with general shifts in focus regarding absorption of ideas such as trends in jurisprudence toward the *Verfassungswissen* “constitutional studies” (*kokuseichi* 国制知) of France, the United Kingdom and Germany (as demonstrated in the process of the enactment of the Meiji Constitution)¹⁴ and the move in education theory from American Pestalozzian developmentalism toward rote-learning and German Herbartian methods.

Under such circumstances, the pro-Confucian stance adopted in moral education during the period of the separation of education and religion (as seen in the preceding section of this article) came to be perceived as impractical and inappropriate. Then in 1887 the “moral education debate” (*tokuiku ronsō* 德育論争) concerning the future direction of moral education, including the rights and wrongs of bringing in religion, developed animatedly among intellectuals and those with an interest in education. Issues such as the provision via Buddhism of moral education or even general education to those who were not Buddhist clergy became topics for the press and then matters for concrete action.

¹³ Under Minister of Education Mori Arinori, imperial ordinances according to the type of school were issued between March and April 1886, including the First Elementary Schools Ordinance, the Teacher Training Schools Ordinance, the Middle Schools Ordinance and the Imperial Universities Ordinance. These are referred to with the generic name of “The Schools Ordinances” (*shogakkōrei* 諸学校令), but after these came the Second Elementary Schools Ordinance (October 1890), the High Schools Ordinance (June 1894), the Girls' High Schools Ordinance (February 1899), the Industrial Schools Ordinance (also in February 1899) and the Private Schools Ordinance (August 1899). I would like to refer to this wider process of the preparation and provision of laws and ordinances as “the period of the prescription of schools ordinances.”

¹⁴ Takii 1999.

So, let us take a look at the three aspects of this proximity starting with the aspect of “persons.” In this period, overlapping with the “moral education debate,” the debate on monks serving concurrently as teaching staff which had been lacking during the period of the separation of education and religion dealt with in the previous section came to be expounded vociferously across newspapers, Buddhist periodicals and also education journals. Those like Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919) who had moved away from their religious organizations and become involved in general education, and monks in the upper echelons of their religious organizations such as Shimaji Mokurai now entered the debate. Some claimed that a “silent proselytization” may be anticipated from monks serving concurrently as teachers in elementary schools: their striving for education with correct moral conduct, even without the teaching of doctrine, might cause the students to develop sympathy for Buddhism.

With regard to the “place” of education, the first thing we should give thought to is the establishment by monks in the various regions of simplified elementary courses for impoverished children. The monks argued that this provision was an example of “the Buddhist principle of charitable benevolence” (*jizen* 慈善). Teacher training schools aimed at monks were also founded in Tokyo and Kyoto.

Then in 1887 the various sects pooled their financial resources to open a school named the Kōtō Futsū Gakkō 高等普通学校 (“General Higher School”). This was a private school teaching the Kōtō Chūgakkō 高等中学校 (“Higher Middle School,” that is, a school equivalent to a present-day high school under the pre-war system of education) curriculum to boys over the age of twelve who were admitted regardless of whether or not they were monks.

However, in the background of the widespread growth of the simplified elementary course program and founding of the Kōtō Futsū Gakkō, it seems there was a sense of rivalry with Christianity, especially with the Dōshisha 同志社 in Kyoto. The primary purpose of this institution, like that of the Futsū Kyōkō 普通教校 (“General School”) founded in Kyoto in 1885 by the Jōdo Shinshū Honganji branch which also took students regardless of their status either as monk or layperson, is seen as having been to ensure a flow of talented and capable monks. The basic import of the aforementioned foundations upholding the ideal of “the cultivation of persons of ability who may guide an ‘enlightened’ (*bunmei* 文明) society in the right direction” is perhaps as follows. These schools were not set up to provide specialist training in doctrine but rather, within the framework of high level, all-round education, to familiarize the younger generations with Buddhism and create intellectuals of sincere faith and monks imbued with the new learning. As a

result of these efforts, it would be Buddhism, not Christianity, which gained special social recognition as a worthy presence within Japan's "enlightened civilization."

Turning our attention to "content," in 1888 a moral education textbook for use in elementary schools entitled *Bukkyō tokuiku genbun icchi shōgaku kyōkasho* 仏教德育言文一致小学教科書 ("Elementary Textbook for Buddhist Moral Education in Colloquial and Written Forms") was published by the Jōdo Shinshū Honganji branch monk Katō Eshō 加藤恵証 (1854–1916). (See figure 1.) This was originally intended for publication during the period of the separation of education and religion described in the preceding section, but opportunity to actually bring this work to press was not found until the time of the moral education debate. This textbook, setting the unification of the written and colloquial forms of the language (*genbun icchi* 言文一致) as a standard, explained in simplified form the doctrines of Buddhism in three sections based on a "lyrical style" (seven-and-five-syllable meter), "question and answer style" (the tone of a teacher replying to a student's questions in the *desu/masu* form) and lecture style (the *dearu* form). In the preface, the reason why hitherto there had been no textbooks on Buddhism for elementary school students was stated as having been because Buddhism was "subtle, profound and wondrously excellent" (*yūgen kōmyō* 幽玄高妙). Therefore, it was declared: "By explaining the virtues of Buddhism in connection to the realities of school life we may look forward to the betterment of moral education."

As we have seen above, this period is quite different from the period of the separation of education and religion in which the Buddhist authorities focused single-mindedly on the provision of institutions for the training of monks. The moral education debate coupled with the new education system represented by the simplified elementary course shaped a "place" in which Buddhist monks engaged in school education. Then, with the production of moral education textbooks, they made inroads into educational "content." We can, at least, summarize events in this way.

Re-separation 1890–1899

Buddhism and education nonetheless moved once again toward separation, the turning point being in 1890. It is well known that the Imperial Rescript on Education was promulgated in October of that year. However, with regard to aspects of "place," this was the year in which the Kōtō Futsū Gakkō was closed. It was also the year in which the simplified elementary course, which had not produced successful results nationwide, was abolished

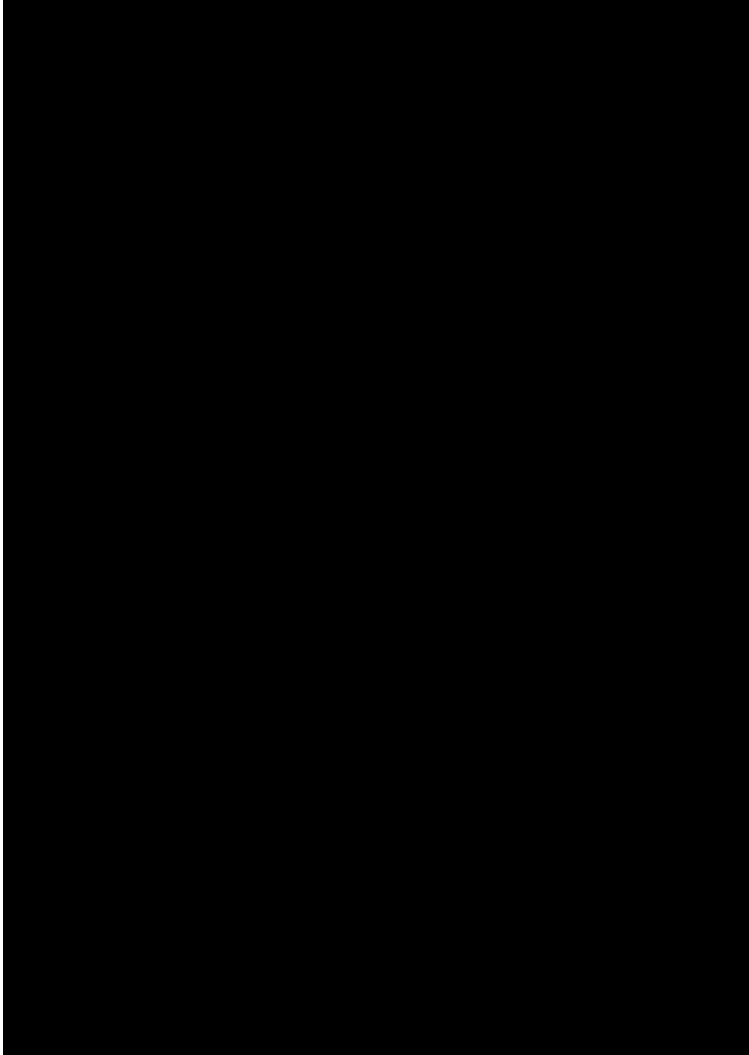


Figure 1. *Bukkyō tokuiku genbun icchi shōgaku kyōkasho* (Nagata Bunshōdō, 1888). In the upper part, we see the table of contents and first page. Below that is the tenth page with questions and answers on cause and effect (*inga* 因果) and the fruits of one's own karma (*jigō jitoku* 自業自得), as well as illustrations that show two examples of "cause and effect": (1) devotion to study leading to graduation (*top*) and (2) committing theft leading to being arrested and sent to prison (*bottom*). From the National Diet Library *Digital Library from the Meiji Era* (<http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/>). Accessed 15 January 2011.

via the enactment of the Second Elementary Schools Ordinance. Due to a great extent to this system change, there was a shift in the principal social welfare projects advocated as acts of “charitable benevolence” by Buddhist organizations from education for impoverished children to post-disaster reconstruction aid and assisting with wars. Some Buddhist religious organizations would on occasion invite the intervention of the Home Ministry if there was internal trouble at the head temple. Also, progress was made in rendering the finances of Buddhist organizations healthy and in the upkeep of their organizational structures, including facilities for the training of monks. The state of affairs developed such that support within Buddhist organizations for their participation in public education became almost entirely undetectable.

With regard to “persons,” there was as ever the problem of the shortage of teaching staff. Certainly, specialist teacher training schools had started to make progress along the right lines, but it seems that there were still examples of monks serving concurrently as school teachers. This concurrent service, however, received little attention in the debates over “the clash of religion and education” which took place in 1892 and 1893 after the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education and events such as the so-called *Lèse Majesté* Incident (*fukei jiken* 不敬事件) involving Uchimura Kanzō 内村鑑三 (1861–1930). This debate was composed of a great deal of invective discourse pointing out the ways that Christianity was incompatible with the moral education in schools, which was the guiding principle of the Imperial Rescript on Education, and a small number of counterarguments from the Christian side. Regarding monks serving as teachers, there was only the following call for the removal of religious professionals from active engagement in teaching from Kusakabe Sannosuke 日下部三之介 (1856–1925), director of the “Great Japan Education Association” (Dainippon Kyōikukai 大日本教育会):

Teachers are teachers, oneself is oneself, and teaching is teaching, faith is faith. Thus a clear distinction cannot be established between these things. . . . Appointments of elementary school teachers should certainly be made from among those who are not professional religious (*shūkyōsha* 宗教者).¹⁵

Can religious professionals serving as teachers educate their pupils without ever bringing their faith out into the open? This was the kind of concern raised by Kusakabe. There was a rejoinder made in a response to him

¹⁵ Kusakabe 1892.

from the Christian Yokoi Tokio 横井時雄 (1857–1927),¹⁶ but no opinion on concurrent service as school teachers was put forth by monks during this debate. Then in 1896 the Home Ministry and Ministry of Education expressed for the first time the view that official full-time teaching staff serving concurrently as Buddhist monks should be avoided.¹⁷

There also was change regarding “content.” The Imperial Rescript on Education, which had deliberately avoided words specifically associated with religions, despite that gap in content (or rather, because of it), brought its influence to bear through the aforementioned clash of religion and education debate. That is to say, public criticism of the Rescript gradually became a social taboo. In this debate Buddhist monks put their main strength into an attack on Christianity and did not “clash” with education. Indeed, their actions were quite the contrary of a “clash.” In July 1894 the outbreak of war between China and Japan was approaching and the 1899 commencement of rights for foreigners to live alongside Japanese people in the interior as opposed to being limited to designated port areas was just around the corner. Japan carried out revision and improvement of treaties with the United Kingdom involving a new treaty which abolished consular jurisdiction (extraterritoriality) that was to become effective in five years time, and later signed similar treaty amendments with other countries. Buddhist monks found a part to play in explaining and interpreting the Imperial Rescript on Education outside of schools.¹⁸

As a further instantiation of this tendency toward “separation,” strict laws were enacted via the Ministry of Education Directive Number 12 of August 1899 banning religious education in government schools, public schools and private elementary schools, middle schools and high schools for girls:

¹⁶ Yokoi 1892.

¹⁷ See “Memorandum from the Ministry of Education Director of Educational Affairs/Home Ministry Director of the Bureau for Shrines and Temples” (*Monbushō futsū gakumu kyokuchō, Naimushō shaji kyokuchō tsūchō* 文部省普通学務局長・内務省社寺局長通牒), dated 11 March 1896. In *Monbushō* 1987, pp. 120–21.

¹⁸ For example the Sōtō Zen monk Kōno Setsugon 河野雪巖 (n.d.) of Masuda 益田, Shimane Prefecture, stated: “It would seem to my eyes that the general trend in current educational circles is toward it being commonplace to think of the Imperial Rescript on Education heretofore handed down by his majesty the emperor as if it were the sole possession of elementary schools. . . . Therefore, it is my understanding that it is the duty of we Buddhist monks to make it [the Imperial Rescript] known to ordinary subjects.” (From a letter dated 24 April 1899, addressed to Shinagawa Yajirō 品川弥二郎 [1843–1900].) He was taking the occasion of foreigners being granted rights to live alongside Japanese people in the interior as an opportunity to call for cooperative action among the monks of his neighborhood. See Shōyū Kurabu 1996, p. 436.

Making general education independent of and external to religion is of the greatest importance in the administration of school education. Accordingly, in government and public schools along with those in which the curriculum is regulated by statutory ordinances [i.e., private schools], the practice of religious education or religious ceremonies even outside of the regular curriculum is not to be permitted.¹⁹

It could be said that this directive was a result of the government having come close, before the rights for foreigners to live alongside Japanese people in the interior came into force, to putting forward a definite view on the “separation” of education and religion. However, if we consider the situation of the Buddhist religious organizations at that time, we can see them as having already laid the groundwork to adapt to this directive, because they had, as we have seen, already experienced their (compulsory) disassociation from school education in terms of persons, place and content. Indeed, no argument was forthcoming from Buddhist quarters against Directive Number 12. Ceremonies and worship were permitted in Buddhist-affiliated schools in contradistinction to the moral education and good guidance in thought (*shisō zendō* 思想善導) demanded by the state. This tolerant disposition toward Buddhist-affiliated schools was perhaps connected to monks serving concurrently as school teaching staff having been, as far as the government was concerned, a useful and expedient (non-problematic) state of affairs which had delivered positive results over time.

Buddhism’s participation in public education, which had thus far been limited to “persons,” came during the period of the sudden proximity (1886–1890) of religion and education (described in the preceding section) through statutory routes (the simplified elementary course system) and with the debate over moral education to include aspects of “place” and “content.” There was another sudden change, however, marking the period of the re-separation of religion and education (1890–1899) analyzed in this section. During this time the statutory framework which had supported the participation of Buddhist monks in public education was lost, and this along with the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education led to a rapid weakening of that participation and hastened the re-separation of religion and education. Though the “persons” aspect of the relationship between religion and education, that is to say the monks serving concurrently as school teaching staff, continued in a state of “no separation,” the heightening of

¹⁹ Naikaku Kanpōkyoku 1899, p. 257.

debates on concurrent service and the conditions of that concurrent service seen in the period of sudden proximity become ever harder to make out on the center stage of history.

CONCLUSIONS

Albeit a somewhat loose examination, we have thus far considered various observations regarding the connection between education and religion in modern society, or the separation of the two. As essential factors thereof, this paper has focused on three aspects: “persons,” “place” and “content.” It has also emphasized a repeating fluctuation between “proximity and separation” in early Meiji Japan. We might say that the school education system was rolled out comparatively smoothly in modern Japanese society because within this fluctuation, the facets of Buddhism related to “persons” and “place” were made use of. So how did the historical character of the school education which established itself in Japanese society, with the resources held by Buddhism as one of its foundations, come to possess its particular characteristics? At this point I do not yet have a clear-cut answer to this question. But let us consider how the experience of “separation” was capitalized upon as events continued to unfold. Then there is the question of what meaning the concurrent service of “persons” as monks and school teaching staff held for government, religious organizations and society. I think that these questions may be answered if we pursue them a little further into the following period.

Regarding the ways in which prior experience was capitalized upon, I would like to touch on the connection with the early modern period. In anti-Buddhist discourse from Confucian scholars or those of National Learning, there were lines of argument expressing the view that: “Though of old monks were the teachers of the masses, teaching reading and writing, this education is now unsatisfactory and in a state of idleness. Therefore let us have them return to secular life” (such as in the 1788 work, *Sōbō kigen* 草茅危言, by the Edo-period scholar Nakai Chikuzan 中井竹山 [1730–1804]). Nonetheless, in the debates on the concurrent service of monks as school teaching staff which took place prior to and during the period of sudden proximity (1886–1890) there were arguments made which countered the position set forth in this anti-Buddhist discourse. These advocated the appropriateness and obligation of Buddhist monks’ participation in education, and the merits thereof. Of course, these arguments did not make a case for the revival of temple schools (*terakoya* 寺子屋) run by Buddhist monks. They were leveraged, rather, into a discourse fitted to the modern reality of the

concurrent holding of the positions of Buddhist monk and school teacher: “Of old, monks were the teachers of the masses. Therefore it is right that they should be school teaching staff.” Furthermore, as Hikino Kyōsuke has argued in his paper in the present issue of this journal, if we bear in mind the heightening of awareness of “sects” (*shūha* 宗派) in the late early modern period, the history of successive setbacks faced by the joint efforts of sects in educational enterprises from the early years of Meiji onward—the Shoshū Dōtoku Kaimei 諸宗同徳会盟 (“Organization of United Buddhist Sects”), the Daikyōin and then the Kōtō Futsū Gakkō—may be well understood. We may explain the setbacks in terms of this heightened awareness of sect having persisted at least until the middle of the Meiji period.²⁰

Finally, I wish to draw attention to two individuals closely concerned with the unfolding of the situation from this point onward. One of these is Nomura Yoshibē 野村芳兵衛 (1896–1986), known for his involvement in educational practice and the Taishō-period New Education Movement (*Shin kyōiku undō* 新教育運動). Nomura graduated from the Gifu Prefectural Teacher Training School (*Gifu-ken shihan gakkō* 岐阜県師範学校) and became an elementary school teacher in that prefecture, but went to Tokyo in 1924 and began serving as a teacher at the Ikebukuro Jidō no Mura 池袋児童の村 Elementary School. The key criterion for educational practice which he set there was deep Buddhist faith and above all the teachings of Shinran. He expressed doubts concerning overemphasis on western-style intellectual training, while stressing the importance of “communality and cooperation” (*kyōsei kyōryoku* 共生協力) among the pupils, founded in shared life experience. The other individual to whom I would like to draw attention is the Jōdo Shinshū Ōtani branch monk Kizu Muan 木津無庵 (1867–1943), who in the early part of the Shōwa period traveled around the nation’s normal schools explaining Buddhism to the students in plain language. Though he was not an educator, in the same manner as Nomura he boldly moved toward Buddhist involvement in the “content” aspect of moral education, which by then was supposedly thoroughly separate from religion. In bringing Buddhism into teacher training facilities and girls’ high schools and having the students who attended the lectures write down their thoughts on the content, he sought to gain a new foothold for the propagation of Buddhism. Then, in 1935 (the tenth year of Shōwa) the Ministry of Education put out a memorandum from the Vice-Minister entitled “Matters for Attention Regarding Education for the Cultivation of Religious Sentiment” and thus “education for the cultivation of religious sentiment” came

²⁰ Up until the founding in 1926 of Taisho University, which called for a union of Buddhist sects, we may consider the actual “union” of Buddhist sects to have been rather limited.

to be permitted in schools regardless of whether they were government or private. The “religion” being permitted here was limited to the type which did not criticize the state regime; but Buddhism was of that category. We might imagine the possibility that some of the successes of the activities of people such as Nomura and Kizu, who are as yet relatively unrecognized in historical scholarship, might have been at work in the background leading to the circulation of this memorandum and the acceptance of religious participation in education by those in the government that it implies. If this were so, then even after the 1899 directive, aspects of closeness between Buddhism and education were most likely manifest beneath the surface, or simply in a place to which scholars of history have not turned their attention.

In order to concretely address the issues of Buddhism and education in the society of the late Meiji period onward, we need an approach founded in the realities of the schools themselves. We need to look closely at the individuals who were linked with both education and Buddhism, acting amid the ebb and flow between proximity and separation of the two, and outside university academia.

(Translated by Jon Morris)

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