

# Against Buddhist Unity: Murakami Senshō and his Sectarian Critics

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## *Introduction*

THE study of the intellectual history of modern Japanese Buddhism has focused on those individuals who can loosely be referred to as “doctrinal modernists” (*kindai kyōgakusha* 近代教学者).<sup>1</sup> A typical introduction to the Buddhism of this period will most likely include references to such eminent figures as Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 (1838–1911), Murakami Senshō 村上專精 (1851–1929), Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919), Tanaka Chigaku 田中智学 (1861–1939), Kiyozawa Manshi 清沢満之 (1863–1903), Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945), and Suzuki Daisetz 鈴木大拙 (1870–1966). Without doubt, the study of these men, as both individual thinkers and figures who represent a certain intellectual milieu, is an important and academically rewarding task. This emphasis, however, has come at the expense of not addressing the other side of the coin: sectarian-minded conservative thinkers. Not surprisingly, Ikeda Eishun, in one of his last works, offered the perspicacious comment that “although the transdenominational thought (*tsūbukkyōteki shii* 通仏教的思惟) of reform-minded [Buddhist] leaders is def-

<sup>1</sup> The term “doctrinal modernist” is commonly used by the Ōtani branch to refer specifically to Kiyozawa Manshi and his disciples. Along with maintaining this meaning here, I also use it to refer to a much broader group of thinkers. Of course, I realize that, other than in a purely heuristic sense, it is problematic to lump all of these figures together.

initely illustrative of their response to changes in the historical climate, we still have no idea as to their relationship with the various aspects of conservative sectarian Buddhism.”<sup>2</sup> To my knowledge, other than Ikeda’s extemporaneous remark and an informative chapter in Janine Tasca Sawada’s recent book, *Practical Pursuits: Religion, Politics, and Personal Cultivation in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, there have been few attempts to make conservative Buddhist thinkers of this period a focus of inquiry.<sup>3</sup>

In earlier oral versions of this paper, I attempted to move beyond this one-dimensionality by carrying out what seemed to be a straightforward operation. Through examining sectarian responses to Murakami Senshō’s seminal modernist *Bukkyō tōitsuron* 仏教統一論 (On the Unification of Buddhism), I sought to demonstrate that such works did indeed provide evidence for a growing trend among Meiji Buddhist intellectuals to purportedly go beyond sectarian boundaries and conceive of Buddhism in a normative or global sense.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, however, I also argued that it was this very ecumenicalism that provided the foil for many scholars of a more traditional disposition to reconstitute their own sectarian identities. Upon further inquiry, I came across several opinion pieces written by Murakami in the *Chūgai nippō* and two previously unknown (at least to me) texts penned near the end of his life, *Shinshū no shinmenboku wa nahen ni zonsuru ka* 真宗の真面目は那邊に存する乎 (Where is the True Identity of Shinshū?) and *Gakan shinshū* 我觀真宗 (My View of Shinshū).<sup>5</sup> To my surprise, in these pieces, which are rebuttals to two works written by Kaneko Daiei 金子大栄 (1881–1976), the doctrinal modernist and student of Kiyozawa, Murakami makes a radical turn: along with doctrinal modernism in general, he disavows his earlier writings (i.e., *Bukkyō tōitsuron*) and now, ill and facing death, speaks solely from the position of Shin “tradition,” which, in his eyes, has little tolerance or need for pan-Buddhist goodwill, dialogue with Western philosophy, or modern extrapolations from the letter of sacred and timeless texts. Now approaching the end of his life, Murakami argues that all that he had previously written and said—

<sup>2</sup> Ikeda 1997.

<sup>3</sup> See Sawada 2004, pp. 211–35.

<sup>4</sup> I have used the most recent version of this work (Murakami 1997). On Murakami, for example, see Sueki Fumihiko’s piece in this issue and also in its original Japanese version (Sueki 2004, pp. 86–109). For other works on Murakami by Japanese scholars, see Tamura 2001, Matsuoka 1991, and Serikawa 1982.

<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank Erik Schiketanz for obtaining a copy of *Shinshū no shinmenboku wa nahen ni zonsuru ka* for me from Ryukoku University.

which he laments was similar to what contemporaneous young Ōtani scholars like Kaneko were once again erroneously attempting—was folly. In light of this turn, I will now argue that attempting to move beyond the one-dimensional nature of current studies on modern Japanese Buddhism by taking into account the sectarian-minded conservative is not enough. Along with the need for introducing disruptive counter-narratives into the master tale of Japanese Buddhist modernity, we must also remember that these counter-narratives are themselves subject to being disrupted and displaced as well.

I have recently written at some length on how the conflict between doctrinal modernists and sectarian-minded conservatives manifested itself in the Ōtani branch of the Shin denomination during the Meiji and Taishō eras.<sup>6</sup> Although I will not restate my argument here, it is useful to explain certain suppositions behind my approach. Contemporary scholars of Higashi Honganji have often, intentionally or not, presented the modern history of the Ōtani branch as being primarily a narrative about Kiyozawa (and his disciples) and the formation of the aforementioned doctrinal modernism. A more thorough examination provides us with another picture. Despite the undeniable fact that Kiyozawa and those close to him captured the minds of many intellectuals inside and outside of the Ōtani branch (and, judging by the recent spate of books and academic papers on Kiyozawa, many Japanese intellectuals today), Kiyozawa and his associates were also seen by more “traditional” priests (who still held a great deal of power, institutionally and over the members of their own parishes) and laity as being heretics (*ianjin* 異安心).<sup>7</sup> Along with Kiyozawa, this list includes such figures as Urabe Kanjun 占部観順 (1824–1910), Inoue

<sup>6</sup> See Ward 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Obviously, being called or rumored to be a heretic is different from actually being brought up on charges and punished as one. Many of the doctrinal modernists, like Akegarasu Haya and Andō Shūichi, were summoned to the head temple and subjected to interrogation but never actually charged with heresy. Although I have discussed the Shin notion of heresy in Ward 2005, it may be useful to at least cite some of the more representative “scholarly” (most of these works are really thinly veiled heresiographies and not “serious” academic inquiries into the problem—they tell us more about how orthodox Shin scholars think about heresy than they do about the actual nature of the problem) contributions. See, for example, Nakajima 1912, Koreyama 1918–19, Nakai 1930, Mizutani 1934, Ishida 1951, Ōhara 1956, and Kashiwahara 1996. On the broader question of Buddhist heretics in the modern period, see Ikeda 1995 and 1996. There are also a number of specialized papers dealing with individual *ianjin* incidents (i.e., *the Sangō wakuran* 三業惑乱, *the Tonjō jiken* 頓成事件, and so forth) that I have omitted here. For the best (and only) introduction in English to the problem of heresy in the Shin denomination, see Dobbins 1984.

Hōchū 井上豊忠 (n.d.), Murakami, Akegarasu Haya 暁鳥敏 (1877–1954), Andō Shūichi 安藤州一 (n.d.), Sasaki (Yamada) Gesshō 佐々木 (山田) 月樵 (1875–1926), Soga Ryōjin 曾我量深 (1875–1971), and, as we will see, Kaneko Daiei. As Soga noted in a rectorship address at Otani University in 1954, this clash between conservative sectarian-minded scholars and Kiyozawa’s disciples continued “almost until the end of World War II.”<sup>8</sup> When we take into account the so-called Higashi Honganji Conflict (*ohigashi funsō* お東紛争) of more recent days, which pitted scholars of the Kiyozawa lineage (among others) against the Ōtani family and certain conservative elements, we can reasonably argue that this struggle has continued well into the postwar period.<sup>9</sup> In the case of the Ōtani branch, the dismissal of sectarian-minded conservatives and their role in the formation of Japanese Buddhist modernity is not simply due to a lack of imagination or careless methodology.

Of course, I do not mean to suggest that the inability to examine the role of sectarian-minded Ōtani conservatives in the modern period can entirely be accounted for due to the existence of a certain agenda on the part of contemporary Ōtani scholars. There is also the aforementioned and more pervasive problem of the seemingly intractable and ubiquitous methodology used by scholars of modern Japanese Buddhism that tends to narrowly focus on doctrinal modernists and their representative texts. Against this, and in order to address some of the lived contingencies of the modern period, my work here examines a number of overlooked texts: writings by sectarian-minded scholars, memoirs, the print media, and the last writings of Murakami.

Along with such general methodological considerations, for this inquiry it is useful to take into account two broader and mutually related historical trends within the Shin denomination of the late Meiji era: the growth of Westernized educational institutions and, to borrow a neologism coined by the Nishi Honganji scholar Nonomura Naotarō 野々村直太郎 (1871–1946), the demythologization of Pure Land thought (*jōdo shisō no hishinwaka* 浄土思想の非神話化).<sup>10</sup> Faced with a growing Western presence and the perceived

<sup>8</sup> Soga 2001, pp. 600–601.

<sup>9</sup> For a brief introduction to the *ohigashi funsō* in English, see Thelle 1976. See also Cooke 1978 and 1988. For more detailed studies (in Japanese), see Tahara 2004 and Ochiai 1995.

<sup>10</sup> Although one can note a number of other developments that must also be considered when discussing doctrinal changes in modern Shin thought, for our purposes, it is useful to recall that texts written by or attributed to Shinran 親鸞 (i.e., *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証, *Tannishō* 歎異抄) were rarely available for perusal before the Meiji period. In an excellent paper comparing Tokugawa and Meiji Ōtani hermeneutical practices (as seen in Akegarasu’s reading of the

menace of Christianity, both Nishi and Higashi Honganji were quick, if not always successful, in reforming their academic arms. Already by 1868, Higashi Honganji had constructed the Hall for the Defense of the Dharma (*gohōjō* 護法場), where traditional Tokugawa Shin scholasticism (*shūjō* 宗乘) was supplemented with non-sectarian studies (*yojō* 余乘) and “Western learning” (*yōgaku* 洋学).<sup>11</sup> In time, both Nishi and Higashi Honganji established secondary schools and universities based on a putative “Western” model. The Ōtani branch was also quick to dispatch its most promising young minds to study in the West and at Tokyo Imperial University. Men such as Nanjō Bun’yū 南条文雄 (1849–1927) and Kasahara Kenju 笠原研寿 (1852–83), who trained under Max Müller at Oxford, learned to use modern critical methods in researching Buddhist texts and read these works in their original Indic languages, while also immersing themselves in the burgeoning field of comparative religion.<sup>12</sup> Contemporaneously, those who studied at Tokyo Imperial University—Inoue Enryō, Kiyozawa, and Nonomura—were also exposed to Western scientific methods and philosophy. Armed with this new knowledge, a great number of young priests came to find the traditional Shin doctrine that subscribed to the physical reality of the Pure Land and the ontological existence of Amida Tathāgata problematic, if not untenable. For many, the reinterpretation of the Pure Land tradition became a project of utmost importance. Most representative of this new form of reinterpretation is Kiyozawa, known for his famous dictum: “I do not believe in the (Amida) Tathāgata because it exists. The (Amida) Tathāgata exists because I believe.” In a similar vein, let us also consider Nonomura’s view that “Jōdo Shin thought had been held pris-

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*Tannishō*), Fukushima Eiju (2003) has noted how the *Tannishō* (the Ōtani doctrinal modernist urtext) was by no means a popular or accessible work in the Edo period; and when it was read, it was done so in a radically different sense. We should also recall how Rennyo held that the *Tannishō* was a work that should be “hidden” from the eyes of most priests. Thus, for a vast expanse of time, Shinran was neither seen as a religious philosopher (*à la* Kierkegaard) nor a religious reformer (*à la* Luther); he was primarily a living Buddha, a Tathāgata, who was worshiped thusly, and certainly not open to broad interpretation. This was not only due to a lack of dissemination of his texts but also due to a general mentality of veneration toward him and his writings. From the Meiji era onward, that Shinran could be read and emulated by almost anyone was a considerable source of contention and consternation for traditionalist scholars, whose long-standing role of authoritative exegesis was accordingly relativized. Why listen to mediators when one could go to the source itself?

<sup>11</sup> For the most recent study on the *gohōjō*, see Miharu 1994. See also Kiba 1989.

<sup>12</sup> For a recent study in English on Nanjō and Kasahara, see Hayashidera 2004a. In Japanese, see Hayashidera 2004b.

oner to the idea of birth in the Pure Land” and that “Amida Tathāgata was not a real historical figure.”<sup>13</sup>

Amid these educational and intellectual transformations, the role of the traditional seminary and its emphasis on succession from teacher to disciple (*shishi sōjō* 師資相承) and a static mode of scholastic exegesis—what Murakami pejoratively referred to in his early writings as *Kunkoteki kenkyū* 訓詁的研究—came under fire.<sup>14</sup> Just what was the need for these “atavists” in the “modern” world? What use were their antiquated methods of pedagogy and naïve and ascientific beliefs in the Pure Land as a posthumous paradise and Amida Tathāgata as its quasi-anthropomorphic caretaker? As we will see, though, despite how they have often been portrayed by postwar academics (when they have been mentioned at all), conservative scholars of both the Higashi Honganji Takakura Seminary (Takakura Gakuryō 高倉学寮) and Nishi Honganji Kangaku Seminary (*Kangakuryō* 勸学寮) were not content with being dismissed as historical anachronisms. Much like their modernist counterparts, sectarian-minded conservatives readily made use of such fashionable concepts as religion and faith, the rapidly growing print media, teaching assemblies and lay societies, scholarly journals, and the Western style of public speech (*enzetsu* 演説) to discredit and dispute their opponents.

### *Criticizing Unification*

I begin with a survey of representative criticisms leveled against the *Bukkyō tōitsuron* by these conservative thinkers. Sources show that Murakami’s critics focused on the earliest published sections of his text. In examining doctrinal criticisms of Murakami’s work, I have made use of two little-known collections that bring together a wide range of responses—from the popular media, scholars of Buddhism and religion, and Jōdo Shin writers—to the *Bukkyō tōitsuron*: the *Bukkyō tōitsuron dai-ippen taikōron hiyō ronshū* 仏教統一論第一編大綱論批評論集 (hereafter *Ronshū*) and the *Murakami hakase Bukkyō tōitsuron hiyō zenshū dai-issshū* 村上博士仏教統一論批評全集第一集 (hereafter *Zenshū*).<sup>15</sup> My discussion of these criticisms is followed by a reflection on the broader institutional background against which Murakami and his critics were writing.

<sup>13</sup> For Nonomura’s controversial *Jōdokyō hihan* 浄土教批判, see Nonomura 1923.

<sup>14</sup> For what is still the only full-length study of the Tokugawa Takakura Seminary, see Takeda 1944.

<sup>15</sup> My copies were obtained from the National Diet Library.

Despite the variety of responses to the *Bukkyō tōitsuron*, based on many of the pieces in the two works cited above, we can single out three major charges brought against it and its author on the part of sectarian scholars: (1) the conflation of sectarian doctrine into a normative and ahistorical Nirvanic essence and the subsequent effacing of the Pure Land and Amida's reward-body (Skt. *sambhogakāya*; Jp. *hōjin* 報身) into mere idealizations of this essence; (2) the equally undermining affirmation of the *Daijō hibussetsuron* 大乘非仏説論 [the theory that the Mahāyāna sutras were not preached by the Buddha]; and (3) the conflict between Murakami's dual status as both a Tokyo Imperial University professor and a Higashi Honganji priest.

Although my brief comments will not do justice to the scope of the *Bukkyō tōitsuron*, allow me to say a word or two on several of its premises. The centrality of Nirvana—the “fundamental principle” (*konpon genri* 根本原理) out of which Buddhism arose and the “ultimate ideal” (*saishū risō* 最終理想) to which it returned—was at the heart of Murakami's project of elucidating the unity of Buddhism.<sup>16</sup> Over the long history of Buddhism, Nirvana had acquired many names and increasingly complex guises (including that of Amitābha Tathāgata), to which Murakami provides us with a bewilderingly exhaustive list.<sup>17</sup> In the secondary discourse portion (*yoron* 余論) of his text, where Murakami first lays out many of the themes that will constitute the ensuing chapters of the *Bukkyō tōitsuron*, he also argues for the fundamental and complementary importance of another doctrinal undercurrent: the theory of the bodies of the Buddha (*busshinron* 仏身論).

<sup>16</sup> Murakami 1997, p. 132. A study of how Murakami used the idea of Nirvana throughout his oeuvre would make a useful study in its own right. I wonder to what degree it can be shown that he was influenced by nineteenth-century European Buddhologists' fascination with Nirvana. I think, at least, that it is safe to assume that Murakami was familiar with Max Müller's *Nehangi* 涅槃義, a brief text on Nirvana translated into Japanese by Nanjō Bun'yū and Katō Shōkaku 加藤正廓 (1852–1903). See Müller 1886. For a discussion of Nirvana and 19th-century European thought, see Collins 1998, pp. 96–101 and Almond 1988.

<sup>17</sup> Murakami's list includes: *asamskrta* (*mui* 無為), *tathatā* (*shinnyo* 真如), Suchness (*ichinyo* 一如), Thusness (*nyonyo* 如如), One-mind (*isshin* 一心), *dharmatā* (*hosshō* 法性), *dharmadhātu* (*hokkai* 法界), *dharmakāya* (*hosshin* 法身), Ultimate Reality (*jissō* 真相), True Reality (*jissai* 實際), Middle Path (*chūdō* 中道), *Buddha-dhātu* (*busshō* 仏性), Bliss (*anraku* 安樂), Secret House (*himitsuzō* 秘密藏), *tathāgata-garbha* (*nyoraizō* 如来藏), *paramārtha-satya* (*shōgitai* 勝義諦), *prajñāpāramitā* (*hannya haramita* 般若波羅蜜多), *avatamsaka* (*kegon* 華嚴), Perfect Enlightenment (*engaku* 円覺), *Śūrangama* (*shuryōgon* 首楞嚴), Lotus of the Wonderful Dharma (*myōhō renga* 妙法蓮華), *Mahāvairocana* (*Dainichi Nyorai* 大日如来), and so forth. This list is contained in Murakami 1997, p. 143.

When we examine the historical development of these two doctrines, Murakami states, we see on the one hand that the theory of the bodies of the Buddha began with the concrete and human and slowly “evolved” (*shinpo* 進歩) into “idealized observations.” This is exemplified in the movement from the straightforward worship of the historical Buddha (i.e., Śākyamuni) to the emergence and development of the vast and complex doctrinal systems concerning the reward-body and the Dharma-body (Skt. *dharmakāya*; Jp. *hosshin* 法身) of the Bodhisattva. On the other hand, the theory of Nirvana, which was first highly abstract and idealized, took the exact opposite course and became “pseudo-anthropomorphic” (*gijinteki* 擬人的). This theory of Nirvana, the theory of the “absolute infinite world of the Ideal” (*risō no zettai mugenkai* 理想の絶対無限界), moves from its originary state as a broad, overarching metaphysical abstraction to a rich and colorful Mahāyāna cosmology that, through the concept of the reward-body, posits individual and exemplary Nirvanic embodiments in the form of the Bodhisattva.<sup>18</sup> Both the theory of Nirvana and the theory of the bodies of the Buddha, then, are represented in their most evolved form in the Bodhisattva of the Mahāyāna.

Eminent Buddhist scholars such as Yoshida Kenryū 吉田賢龍 (n.d.) and Sakaino Kōyō 境野黄洋 (1871–1933) were quick to criticize Murakami’s use of Nirvana as a kind of catchall or floating signifier that too readily and conveniently covered all of Buddhist thought.<sup>19</sup> Others were wary that Murakami’s quest for Buddhist unity was not paying attention to sectarian realities. Kusunoki (Wada 和田) Ryūzō 楠龍造 (1874–1933), a Takakura lecturer, wrote, “Having read the *Bukkyō tōitsuron*, the first thing that I can’t help but wonder is just what is meant by this phrase ‘unity of Buddhism.’” Although Murakami cited Nirvana, the Four Noble Truths, and other teachings as the fundamental principles of Buddhism, Kusunoki mused that “in regard to Nirvana, the Four Noble Truths, and so on—in terms of how these ideas are explained—the various denominations of Buddhism do not concur.” Further, in wishfully looking for a source of unity, Murakami failed to address the fact that each Buddhist denomination regarded its own teachings to be the

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 173. In the same passage, Murakami similarly wrote, “There is only one Buddha: Śākyamuni. The other Bodhisattvas are merely abstract forms of this ideal.”

<sup>19</sup> For Yoshida’s comments, see *Ronshū* pp. 8–34. For Sakaino, see *ibid.*, pp. 77–89. We should note that both were generally positive in their reviews of Murakami’s work. *Ronshū* also collects papers by such scholars as Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大常 (1870–1945) and Katō Genchi 加藤玄智 (1873–1965).



ultimate truth and the rest to be merely expedient means. The Tendai denomination, to cite one of Kusunoki's examples, believed in the ultimacy of the teaching that the "chilicosm is contained in one thought" (*ichinen sanzen* 一念三千), whereas the Shin denomination believed in something radically incommensurable: Shinran's 親鸞 teaching of "Absolute Other Power" (*zettai tariki* 絶対他力).<sup>20</sup>

For scholars of a greater sectarian or conservative bent, however, there was more at stake. In light of the growing problem of the tenability of traditional views of the Pure Land and Amida, Murakami's argument that Nirvana and Amida's reward-body were simply signifiers for some higher truth was unsettling. Hōjō Ren'e 北条蓮慧 (n.d.), a conservative Nishi Honganji priest, summed the problem up thusly:

Murakami says that the Amida Tathāgata, Nirvana, and the Truth (*shinri* 真理) are all synonyms for the "Ideal." When one designates Amida Tathāgata as simply a synonym for that which is "Ideal," then one must classify the Original Vow (*hongan* 本願) as being only a hypothetical theory. If the Original Vow of Great Compassion is only a hypothetical theory, then the Shin denomination has absolutely no ground on which to stand.<sup>21</sup>

If conflating all of Buddhism into a singularity and explaining, or explaining away, Amida Tathāgata as a mere idealization of this singularity was problematic, Murakami's affirmation of the *Daijō hibussetsuron* was equally troubling.<sup>22</sup> Drawing on his view that the Bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna were simply pseudo-anthropomorphic idealizations and on the fact that the provenance of many Mahāyāna sutras—for example, Nāgārjuna retrieving the *Avatamsakasūtra* from the Nāga King's submarine palace and the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* from within the bowels of the Iron Stūpa—was accounted for through "mythical and supernatural tales" (*shinwa kaidan* 神話怪談), Murakami conceded that one must "recognize that the Mahāyāna was not taught by the Buddha."<sup>23</sup> An undated and anonymous *Mainichi shinbun* 毎日

<sup>20</sup> *Zenshū*, pp. 31–36.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>22</sup> For a good introduction in English on the role of the *Daijō hibussetsuron* in modern Japanese Buddhism, see Ketelaar 1993, pp. 19–42.

<sup>23</sup> Murakami 1997, p. 175. In understanding Murakami's theory, it is vital to consider his treatment of it in his *Daijō bussetsuron hihan* 大乘仏説論批判 (Murakami 1903). Sueki (2004, pp. 100–109) has briefly discussed the role of this text in Murakami's body of thought. Here,

新聞 (contained in the *Ronshū*) article entitled “The Doubts of Buddhist Society” explained the impact of Murakami’s work.

When we look at the current state of Buddhism, we see that there are a great number of difficulties and debates that are troubling the minds of Buddhists. Speaking very broadly, we can say that these problems are the same as those in Christian society: how to maintain the fortunes of temples (*jiin* 寺院) and [how to solve] questions concerning doctrine. The question of temples aside, the number of doctrinal issues is vast. Just as the question “Who was Jesus?” is a problem that will determine the fate of Christianity, the question “Who was the Buddha?” is a particularly grave problem for Buddhism. Strange biographies (*kaiki no denki* 怪奇の伝記) of the Buddha aside, the foremost question now is “What did the Buddha teach?” Originally, it was held that the sutras and śāstras of both the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna were preached by Śākyamuni. Based on new research findings, however, Western scholars say that only the Hīnayāna represents the true words of Śākyamuni and that he did not preach the Mahāyāna. This research has spread throughout Japan, and, for the most part, is now regarded as fact. With this in mind, in his recent work, the Japanese Buddhist scholar Murakami Senshō has made it known to the general public that the Buddha did not preach the Mahāyāna sutras. Although this is by no means a new theory for us [i.e., intellectuals], we must admit that it is an almost fatal blow for Japanese Buddhists.<sup>24</sup>

As this article makes clear, there was nothing particularly new about the theory as such. (Along with arguments being made by “Western scholars,” the author also most likely had in mind anti-Buddhist Japanese intellectuals and Kokugaku scholars [*kokugakusha* 国学者] like Tominaga Nakamoto 富永仲基 [1715–46] and Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 [1776–1843]. Of course, this was also a problem that had already been addressed by Indian Mahāyānists like Vasubandhu long ago.) What was no doubt eye-opening to many, particularly those in the Shin denomination, was that the latest incarnation of this theory was coming not from outside the saṃgha but from within.

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however, I have limited myself to addressing this theory as it appears in the early parts of the *Bukkyō tōitsuron*.

<sup>24</sup> *Ronshū* (supplemental section, pp. 36–37).

Although this is precisely what his sectarian critics passed right over, Murakami's appropriation of this theory was in direct opposition to those who were using it to undermine the claims to orthodoxy made by the Mahāyāna. Like Tominaga, Murakami realized that the Mahāyāna was indeed different from earlier incarnations of Buddhism. Unlike Tominaga, who viewed the ensuing development of Buddhism as being nothing more than continual doctrinal one-upmanship or "layering" (*kajōsetsu* 加上説), Murakami held that the Mahāyāna was in fact the logical and ideal extension of early Buddhist thought.<sup>25</sup> Influenced by Herbert Spencer, Murakami saw the Mahāyāna as a "developed [i.e., evolved] Buddhism" (*kaihatsuteki bukkyō* 開発の仏教).<sup>26</sup> The Mahāyāna "illuminated the truth of fundamental Buddhism (*konpon bukkyō* 根本仏教) and further developed its essence (*shinzui* 真髓)," and it was this complex and diverse evolution that proved both the Mahāyāna's sophistication over and its essential connection with more "fundamental" or "original" (*genshi bukkyō* 原始仏教) forms of Buddhism.<sup>27</sup> That the historical development of the Mahāyāna could now be seen in the light of evolutionary theory provided a thoroughly modern response to both traditional critics (namely, Tominaga and Hirata) and contemporary nay-sayers (Müller and other European Buddhologists).<sup>28</sup>

Murakami had turned the *Daijō hibussetsuron* on its head, and against those who had used it to attack Mahāyāna Buddhism. This, however, seems to have been misunderstood or at least glossed over by his sectarian critics. Tōyō Engetsu 東陽円月 (1818–1902), the renowned Nishi Honganji priest, stated: "Whether from an academic or faith-based standpoint, for a Jōdo Shin priest to preach the *Daijō hibussetsuron* is something that is unforgivable."<sup>29</sup> Ōtani scholars had even harsher words for Murakami. One anonymous tract held Murakami accountable for the heresy of all heresies: the destruction of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

<sup>25</sup> I follow Ketelaar in translating *kajō* as "layering" (Ketelaar 1993, p. 24).

<sup>26</sup> Honda Bun'yū 本多文雄 mentions a direct influence between Spencer's theory of Social Darwinism and Murakami's idea of Buddhist evolution or "development" (*Zenshū*, p. 51).

<sup>27</sup> Murakami 1997, p. 175.

<sup>28</sup> Notably, a short text written by the anti-modernist Kanrenkai cites Müller's *Nehangi* as being an anti-Mahāyāna work (*Zenshū*, pp. 87–90). Many Japanese Buddhists, it seems, were aware of Müller's disparaging remarks on the authenticity of the Mahāyāna.

<sup>29</sup> *Zenshū*, 24. Although no date is supplied, the *Zenshū* notes that this text first appeared in the *Kyōgaku hōchi* 教学報知 (the forerunner of the *Chūgai nippō* 中外日報).

The Doctor [Murakami] is not a heretic of the Shin denomination. A heretic of the Shin denomination is just someone who misunderstands or holds an incorrect set of beliefs regarding Shin Buddhism. What then is the Doctor? He is one who holds an absolutely false understanding of all of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This is not research: this is destruction. Even if, say, one were to present a contrary hypothesis for the sake of research, why would one not wish to illuminate the true spirit of the Shin denomination and further convey the true essence of Buddhism? But has Murakami not already argued against the Mahāyāna being the words of the Buddha and denied the existence of the reward-body?<sup>30</sup>

The aforementioned Hōjō similarly inquired, “If the Mahāyāna is understood as simply being a developed religion (*hatten shūkyō* 発展宗教), what does the teaching of hearing the name of Amida (*mongo myōgō* 聞其名号) become? What does it signify? If this is just ‘doctrine,’ the Bodhisattvas of the ten directions become groundless beings.”<sup>31</sup>

Along with these criticisms, Murakami’s ambivalent position as both scholar and priest was also one of the central reasons for the attacks against him. For many, it was less a problem of what was being said than who was saying it. Tatsuyama Gakunin 龍山学人 (n.d.), author of a regular column on contemporary religious matters for the magazine *Taiyō* 太陽, explained the problem as follows. First, one had to recognize that “there was absolutely nothing to criticize about Murakami’s attitude as a scholar” and that “his contributions to academics were great.” Murakami’s “denial of the Bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna sutras” and his “arguing that the Mahāyāna was not taught by the Buddha” were, from the standpoint of historical and comparative research, “to be naturally expected.” The problem, however, was one of institutional allegiance.

Murakami is originally a Jōdo Shin follower, a priest of the Ōtani branch. Accordingly, one must ask if the Doctor’s ideas are appropriate for a priest of the Ōtani branch. It goes without saying that Honganji is an authoritative (*kyōken* 教権) school based on sacred

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

teachings (*shōgyō* 聖教) and orthodoxy (*seitō* 正統). The denomination is founded on the three Pure Land sutras, which it holds to be the words of the Buddha. The teachings of the denomination's founder, Shinran, all come from these works, and even the slightest deviation cannot be tolerated. This is just like Catholicism, which will also not allow heterodoxy. This is also something that the Doctor is well aware of. And yet, as a priest, he continues to depend on this authority while simultaneously attacking it with his theories. This is heresy.<sup>32</sup>

Hiramatsu Riei 平松理英 (1855–1916), a leading conservative Takakura thinker, leveled similar charges against what he considered to be the Janus-faced members of the “New Buddhism” (*shin bukkyō* 新仏教) during a polemically charged speech at Kanda's Kinkikan 錦輝館 (a transcript is included in the *Zenshū*, which leads me to conclude that Murakami was the central figure of reproach in Hiramatsu's talk).

What infuriates me most is that although these priests still clothe themselves in the three robes, receive protection from their denomination and parent temple, and subsist off offerings from their parish, they secretly espouse heretical views. In front of so-called scholars or students, these priests promote what is known as “high-collarism” (*haikara shugi* ハイカラ主義).” When it comes time to preach or give a Dharma talk, however, these same men go out of their way to ostentatiously flash the rosary, chant the nembutsu, and appear as if they are members of the “Old Buddhism” (*kyū bukkyō* 旧仏教) . . . If they were to leave Buddhism and provide their own livelihood, then they would be free to do whatever they please. This is just like drinking *sake* with money from your own pocket and then saying all kinds of nonsensical things. As long as people like this don't harm others, there is no reason to criticize them.<sup>33</sup>

Chikuen Gyōsen 竹園行潜 (n.d.), also of the Ōtani branch, offered similar objections: “Obviously, if one can no longer believe in Buddhism, they should remove the three robes, discard the rosary, and return to secular life.” Those like Murakami were “beyond words,” in that they “continued to remain

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 38–39.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 28–29.

within the Shin denomination and yet tacitly worked to destroy its sacred teachings.”<sup>34</sup> Although the above provides only a small sample of the criticism of Murakami, we can discern what made his work so troubling to conservative sectarian intellectuals. We have also seen that these sectarian-minded thinkers were often less interested in dealing with the thorny doctrinal problems that Murakami’s work had broached (What was Buddhism? What was Mahāyāna Buddhism? What was the Jōdo Shin place in it? What was the fate of the Pure Land and Amida Tathāgata in light of philosophy and modern science?) than they were in carrying out the reactionary project of demarcating an inviolable boundary between the sectarian and the academic.

### *Institutional Background to Murakami’s Work*

Murakami’s project of Buddhist unification and his conflicting status as both academic and priest were not all that was being questioned: his active support of the burgeoning reform movement within Higashi Honganji was likewise disturbing. Despite rapid institutional changes made by the Ōtani branch from the Meiji era onward, the Shirakawa Reformation Party (*Shirakawa tō* 白川党), named for its headquarters in Kyoto’s Shirakawa village, demanded an even more radical transformation.<sup>35</sup> The nature of the movement’s specific demands aside, these young upstarts, led by the charismatic Kiyozawa, soon gained the cooperation of such luminaries as Inoue Enryō, Nanjō Bun’yū, and Murakami.

Much as works like the transdenominational *Bukkyō tōitsuron* allowed many conservative Shin thinkers to reaffirm the specific sectarian doctrines of their denomination, the Shirakawa reform movement provided a focal point through which these same men, and bureaucrats like Atsumi Kaien 渥美契縁 (1840–1906) and Ishikawa Shundai 石川舜台 (1842–1931), could reinforce their roles within the Ōtani body politic.<sup>36</sup> One method by which these conservatives marshaled their powers against the reformists was through recourse to the traditional Jōdo Shin concept of heresy.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>35</sup> There has yet to be a comprehensive study of this reform movement. In lieu of this, see Hashida 2003, Ikeda 2002 (pp. 175–214), Terakawa 2001, and Kashiwahara 1967. For the most recent treatment of Kiyozawa’s role in this movement, see Takayama 2006.

<sup>36</sup> For the only study on Ishikawa that I have come across, see Taya 1961. Tsujimura Shinobu, however, has informed me that she is in the process of completing a manuscript on Ishikawa. See Tsujimura 2006.

In 1896, as the reform movement was still in its incipient stages, under orders from Atsumi Kaien, three Takakura lecturers—Ishikawa Ryōin 石川了因 (1843–1922), Hosokawa Sengan 細川千巖 (1834–97), and Ikehara Gaju 池原雅寿 (1850–1924)—initiated proceedings to charge Urabe Kanjun 占部観順, the original rector of Shinshū University 真宗大学寮, with heresy.<sup>37</sup> The first concrete volley in the counter-reform had been fired. Although the actual charges of heresy revolved around Urabe’s controversial exegetics, it seems that it was his support of the Shirakawa movement that was the main factor behind the charges. Although Murakami never directly equated Urabe’s involvement with the reform party and the heresy charges, I believe we can safely ascertain this connection through the following passage found in his memoirs:

Despite having been trained and raised under the former educational system [i.e., Takakura Seminary], it was the old master Urabe Kanjun and myself who were the lamp bearers for the Shirakawa Party. Unfortunately, Urabe was soon involved in charges of heresy, forced to leave the Ōtani branch, and changed (*tenpa* 転派) to the Kōshōji branch 興正寺派. My case was similar. Because of the *Bukkyō tōitsuron*, I too was forced to leave the Ōtani branch, although I never received [direct] punishment from Honganji.<sup>38</sup>

In a separate passage, Murakami, speaking about his own situation, commented that despite his writings (i.e., *Bukkyō tōitsuron*) being the “proximate cause,” it was his involvement with the reform movement that was the “original cause.”<sup>39</sup>

With Urabe gone, Atsumi and the Takakura scholars turned their sights on Inoue Hochū 井上豊忠, a young, Waseda-educated member of the reform movement. On December 11, 1896, Inoue was summoned to the Higashi Honganji headquarters and told that he was to be administered “a test to see if you will go to the Pure Land or plunge into hell.”<sup>40</sup> A stunned and then suspicious Inoue inquired if the investigation of heresy was based on his doctri-

<sup>37</sup> For a study of the Urabe Incident, see Hatabe 1988. Unfortunately, this work does little in the way of examining Urabe’s relationship with the Shirakawa Party or the institutional underpinnings of Urabe’s trial. See also the comments in Ōtani Daigaku Hyakunenshi Henshū linkai 2001, p. 128.

<sup>38</sup> Murakami 1914, pp. 397–8.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 398.

<sup>40</sup> Collected in Mori 1983, p. 467.

nal beliefs or because of his political bedfellows. To this, Yoshitani Kakuju 吉谷覺寿 (1842–1914), the anti-modernist *par excellence*, replied, in koan-like fashion (or, perhaps, this is the more practical application of the Two Truths?), “Sectarian doctrine and sectarian politics are both separate and the same.” Ishikawa Ryōin added, “The discussion of sectarian politics comes straight from the true heart that seeks to love one’s school and defend the Dharma (*aizangohō* 愛山護法). The true love of one’s school and wish to defend the Dharma always arise from orthodoxy.”<sup>41</sup>

It was Murakami who came to Inoue’s aid. The following month (January 1897), Murakami submitted an article to the *Kyōkai jigen* 教界時言, the Shirakawa Party’s monthly periodical, entitled “A Clarification of the Reform Movement’s Goals and Several Questions for Honganji Bureaucrats and Takakura Lecturers.”<sup>42</sup> Murakami began by noting that although protocol demanded that “I subjugate myself to the senior lecturers in the Takakura Seminary, I can no longer bear to allow the greater good to be destroyed because of private affairs and personal emotions.” Murakami rhetorically demanded to know who had ordered Inoue’s heresy trial. Was it, as institutional law required, the branch’s leader, Ōtani Kōen 大谷光演 (1875–1943)? Or was this one more attempt by Atsumi and his cohorts to rid the Ōtani branch of dissenters? Murakami lamented over how some in Honganji were purposely confusing “politics” with “questions of doctrine” in order to silence the reformists. Even more ominously, the anti-reform movement was dispatching agents to the prefectures, where they were spreading damaging rumors about the “heretical” reformists. According to Murakami, the anti-reformist attack centered on projecting a stilted picture of the reformists as having sacrificed religious virtuosity for Western learning: “Our critics say that even if the reformists have academic learning, they have yet to understand the meaning of *Namu-Amida-Butsu*.”

Murakami’s comment can be verified by examining the writings of the Kanrenkai 貫練会, a conservative Higashi Honganji teaching assembly designed to combat the reformist threat.<sup>43</sup> Hiramatsu Riei warned that the minds of young priests “were drunk with Western learning;” Tatsuyama Jiei

<sup>41</sup> Yamada 1991, pp. 124–5. I have briefly discussed Yoshitani in Ward 2005.

<sup>42</sup> Mori 1983, p. 481.

<sup>43</sup> I have written on the Kanrenkai in Ward 2005. The term *kanren* 貫練 comes from the *kanren-dō* 貫練堂, the main lecture hall of the Takakura Seminary. The building, which still exists in Kyoto, is known today as the Takakura Kaikan 高倉会館.



(1837–1921) complained that these reform-minded priests had been “overcome by the trends of the day, and, although in vain, were attempting to reform the tenets of Jōdo Shin;” Yoshitani Kakuju admonished that “academic learning means that one spends their entire life troubling their spirit [in the search of the truth]. This will never lead to (a religious) peace of mind;” and, although not a member of the Kanrenkai, Nakanishi Ushio 中西牛朗 (1859–1930) cited, among others, the specific example of Inaba Masamaro 稲葉昌丸 (1867–1944), a young Shirakawa priest (who would later go on to become a prominent figure in the Ōtani educational system) interested in biology, who was desecrating Honganji with the blood of animals that he was eagerly dissecting on its grounds.<sup>44</sup>

Takakura lecturers were not the only force that these young upstarts had to contend with: Honganji bureaucrats were equally displeased. Although Atsumi began the campaign against Kiyozawa and his disciples, it was Ishikawa Shundai who finished it. Ishikawa, whom Murakami referred to as the “old badger (*tanuki*) of the Shin denomination,” succeeded Atsumi in 1897.<sup>45</sup> He first struck a conciliatory tone with the young reformists; this, however, was ultimately nothing more than a ruse. This same year, Kiyozawa and four other reform party members were temporarily excommunicated. Ishikawa did, however, finally accede to some of the reformist demands, allowing Shinshū University to relocate from Kyoto to Tokyo (Sugamo), in the shadow of Tokyo Imperial University, where Kiyozawa and his followers believed a greater deal of intellectual autonomy could be achieved. They were wrong, but this is a story for another time.<sup>46</sup>

Around this time, Ishikawa turned to settling an old score with Murakami.<sup>47</sup> Ishikawa first suggested that Murakami take an all-expense-paid journey to India, where he could further his studies on the history of Buddhism. Murakami, who seems to have seen through Ishikawa’s subterfuge, declined

<sup>44</sup> See the *Kanrenkai hō* 貫練會報 1899, no. 1, pp. 10–13; no. 10, pp. 18–20; Nakanishi 1897, p. 67.

<sup>45</sup> Murakami 1914, p. 336.

<sup>46</sup> See Ward 2005.

<sup>47</sup> It appears that Murakami had long been a critic of Ishikawa and on more than one occasion had spoken disparagingly of him in a public forum. Murakami recounted how at a speech, “Bukkyō no kako to mirai” 仏教の過去と未来 (The Past and Future of Buddhism), given at Kanda’s Kinkikan, he had stated: “The unspectacular Atsumi Kaien is gone, and he has been replaced by the unspectacular Ishikawa Shundai.” This comment seems to have further aggravated an already contentious relationship with Ishikawa. See Murakami 1914, p. 368.

the offer, citing his lack of competence in foreign languages. To this, Ishikawa, now looking to kill two birds with one stone, suggested that Murakami take Tada Kanae 多田鼎 (1875–1937), one of Kiyozawa’s prized disciples and a staunch reformist (and later, in a turn of heart, a fascinatingly nuanced traditionalist thinker), to serve as interpreter. Again, Murakami declined. With his first two attempts foiled, Ishikawa, along with Takakura scholars, needed other means by which to dispose of Murakami; these they soon found in the publication of the *Bukkyō tōitsuron*. In his memoirs, Murakami recalls, “Yoshitani Kakuju and Tatsuyama Jiei, as representatives of the Takakura Seminary, took a copy of my *Bukkyō tōitsuron* to the Honganji offices. There they requested a meeting with Ishikawa. At this meeting, they demanded that something be done immediately about my work. I assume that this was the perfect chance to find the grounds to punish me that Ishikawa had been waiting for.”<sup>48</sup> Not letting the chance pass him by, Ishikawa chose to convene a meeting of senior Ōtani priests to discuss the appropriate steps to be taken concerning the Murakami problem.<sup>49</sup> The *Nippon shinbun* comments that it was at this meeting that the Ōtani branch, afraid of repercussions from the academic world if they tried the “Doctor” for heresy, arrived at the solution of having Murakami “voluntarily” tender his resignation.<sup>50</sup> Takakura lecturers soon visited Murakami, “suggesting” that he follow in Inoue Enryō’s path and leave the priesthood. Although he first adamantly opposed these suggestions, Murakami began to sense that the situation was placing great pressure on Ōtani Kōen himself.<sup>51</sup> On October 26, 1901, Murakami, after publishing a small explanatory tract entitled “*Waga Shinshū Ōtani-ha no sōseki o dassuru no kokuhakusho*” 我が真宗大谷派の僧籍を脱するの告白書 (My Confession Concerning Leaving the Priesthood of Shinshū Ōtani-ha), returned to lay life. With this, Murakami’s sectarian critics fell silent.<sup>52</sup>

Murakami had at last been removed from Higashi Honganji, and the inviolable boundary between scholar and sectarian had (at least in the case of

<sup>48</sup> An article in the *Nippon shinbun* 日本新聞 (collected in the *Ronshū*, p. 41) also confirms Yoshitani’s involvement, citing that “the head lecturer of the Takakura Seminary, Yoshitani Kakuju, and thirty-seven other lecturers submitted a petition to Honganji demanding that Murakami be punished.”

<sup>49</sup> In his memoirs, Murakami remarked that his punishment “had been decided before the meeting was held.” See Murakami 1914, p. 376.

<sup>50</sup> *Ronshū*, p. 41.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 336–71.

<sup>52</sup> Murakami 1901.

Doctor Murakami) been maintained. Soon, however, others—especially those of the Kiyozawa lineage—further challenged these demarcations. In the early Shōwa era, it was the elderly Murakami, their one-time ally, who now challenged them. Ironically, Murakami’s attacks on the doctrinal modernist position in many ways mirrored earlier criticisms by sectarian scholars against his own work.

*The True Identity of Shinshū*

In 1911, ten years after leaving the priesthood, Murakami was reinstated. In 1926 he succeeded Sasaki Gesshō as president of Otani University. Wracked by illness, his tenure lasted a mere two years. It was around this time that two young scholars, and kindred disciples of Kiyozawa, Kaneko Daiei and Soga Ryōjin (both major figures in the postwar Ōtani branch), became the newest targets in the long-running campaign against the doctrinal modernists.

On February 15, 1925, Kaneko, a professor of Shin Buddhist Studies (*Shinshūgaku* 真宗学) at Otani, published a controversial text based on lectures he had given at Bukkyō University entitled *Jōdo no kannen* 浄土の観念 (The Idea of the Pure Land).<sup>53</sup> This was followed by the publication of the equally controversial *Shinshū ni okeru nyorai oyobi jōdo no kannen* 真宗に於ける如来及浄土の観念 (The Idea of the Tathāgata and the Pure Land in Shinshū) on November 11th of the following year (1926).<sup>54</sup> In June of 1928 he was forced out of the Ōtani branch; Soga’s dismissal followed in March of 1930.

Kaneko, like many modernist Shin thinkers before (and after) him, was struggling with how to reinterpret Amida and the Pure Land in an age when such beliefs seemed no longer possible.<sup>55</sup> In *Shinshū ni okeru nyorai oyobi jōdo no kannen*, Kaneko noted three possible interpretations of the Pure Land: (1) the Pure Land as an idea or *idée* (*kannen kai toshite no jōdo* 観念界としての浄土); (2) the Pure Land as a social ideal which must be realized in this world (*risō toshite no jōdo* 理想としての浄土); and (3) the Pure Land as an actual place (*jitsuzai toshite no jōdo* 実在としての浄土). Kaneko rejected the latter two interpretations and, through some liberal and experimental borrowings from Platonic thought and Neo-Kantian Idealism, argued that the Pure Land

<sup>53</sup> Literally, *Shinshūgaku* translates as “Shin Studies.” However, in deference to the contemporary English translation favored by Ōtani scholars, I have translated it here as “Shin Buddhist Studies.”

<sup>54</sup> Kaneko 1925 and Kaneko 1926.

<sup>55</sup> For a useful (although rather sentimental) biography of Kaneko, see Kikumura 1975. See also Hataya 1993.

appeared to us as a “regulative idea” (*kannen* 觀念).<sup>56</sup> In a July 11, 1928 *Chūgai nippō* article, Kaneko explained that although many of his detractors erroneously believed that his “idea of the Pure Land” was a “psychological” (*shinrigakuteki ni kaishaku shiteiru* 心理学的に解釈している) construct—and, accordingly, a theory arguing for the Pure Land as a fiction or a figment of the imagination—his use of the term *kannen* was of a purely “philosophical” nature. Kaneko’s critics, however, had little time (or the training) for noting philosophical subtleties; the heart of the matter was that Kaneko *seemed* to be arguing that the Pure Land and Amida were nothing more than mental constructs. In his own criticisms Murakami repeatedly cited the following from *Shinshū ni okeru nyorai oyobi jōdo no kannen* as a pithy summation of Kaneko’s problematic work.

The problem is with the words “existence” and “nothingness.” Generally, what do we mean when we say [Amida] “exists”? We imagine the appearance of a great human-like being who looks at us—the suffering—and feels compassion for us. From this, we take refuge in Amida. Obviously, this is not a pure way of thinking. This is an attitude in which one believes in Amida if he exists, but holds it silly to believe if he does not. One has impure thoughts in their mind if they first need to confirm the existence [of Amida] before believing. When we learn of our true self, perform *gasshō*, and take refuge, Amida that appears before us is not, in the daily sense in which we think of such things, bound by words like “existence.” This is something that has gone beyond both nothingness and existence . . . [Many hold that] Amida is totally separate from us, and yet somehow kindly leads us to the Pure Land. [Traditionally,] many believed that this was salvation . . . [But] this is superstitious belief and not true faith.<sup>57</sup>

As this passage illustrates, Kaneko was trying to navigate a path through which he could still argue for a certain kind of existence for Amida without being trapped in the standard (what Kaneko referred to as “common-sensical” [*jōshikiteki* 常識的]) ontological framework of being and nothingness.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> For a critical take on *Jōdo no kannen*, see Tatsudani 1983.

<sup>57</sup> Kaneko 1925, pp. 17–18.

<sup>58</sup> One should note how Kaneko equated traditional belief in the actual existence of Amida and his salvific powers as being “superstitious.” Shin doctrinal modernists often espoused such a position in criticizing a variety of orthopraxies (the popular practice of reciting Rennyō’s *Ofumi* 御文章, etc.) and orthodoxies (as we have seen).

By the early Shōwa, opinion pieces both for and against what was now being referred to as the “Kaneko Problem” deluged the pages of the *Chūgai nippō*. Murakami himself submitted “An Open Letter to Otani University Professor Kaneko (and a Warning to this Same School)” and a series of articles under the title “The Higashi Honganji Heresy Problem.”<sup>59</sup> In the third installment of his series on the problem of heresy, Murakami addressed Kaneko directly, citing an article written by the young professor that had been published in the magazine *Butsuza* 仏座.<sup>60</sup> In the *Butsuza* article, despite the long-standing tradition of referring to Shinran as “Shinran Shōnin” 親鸞聖人, Kaneko had “disrespectfully” (*yobisute* 呼び捨て) omitted the honorific “Shōnin.”<sup>61</sup> This was “impiety in *extremis*” and, according to Murakami’s logic, meant that Kaneko “was not a proper candidate for teaching at Otani University.”

In his own defense, Kaneko argued that referring to “Shinran Shōnin” as “Shinran” was in no way disrespectful. When one was speaking in a sectarian sense, indeed, the honorific should be attached; but it was enough to refer to a religious figure like Shinran without such titles of respect when one was speaking in terms of personal “religious states of mind” (*shūkyōteki shinkyō* 宗教的心境) or in an academic sense. Although this dispute may seem tangential, it is in fact indicative of the more fundamental disagreement between Murakami and Kaneko concerning the role of traditional sectarian studies and a broader, more existential form of religious inquiry. Kaneko’s position on this question can be illuminated by the opening passages of his *Shinshū ni okeru nyorai oyobi jōdo no kannen*:

Today, when we see the term “Shin Buddhist Studies,” there are at least two possible meanings it can have. First, there is the sense in which we address the terms and nuances of Shin doctrine (*kaigaku*

<sup>59</sup> Murakami Senshō, “Higashi Honganji no anjin mondai (3): Kaneko kyōju wa jiketsu shite ka nari” 東本願寺の安心問題 (三): 金子教授は自決して可なり, *Chūgai nippō*, June 15, 1929; “Ōtani Daigaku kyōju Kaneko-kun ni atauru kōkaijō tsukeri chinami ni dōdaigaku ni keikoku su” 大谷大学教授金子君に與ふる公開状附り、因みに同大学に警告す, *Chūgai nippō*, June 16, 1929.

<sup>60</sup> *Butsuza* was a periodical self-published by Kaneko. I have yet to see the article in question.

<sup>61</sup> Murakami’s reactionary tone did not go unnoticed. The *Chūgai nippō* was soon printing letters from readers who found his hypercritical tone inappropriate for a scholar of such eminence; he had attacked a work that he had yet to read and was basing much of his criticism on the trite fact that Kaneko had failed to attach the honorific “Shōnin” to Shinran.

解学). In other words, one inquires as to what kind of doctrine the Shin denomination teaches. This is the standard sense of the term. In this case, Shin Buddhist Studies has limited application . . . Another meaning of Shin Buddhist Studies, however, is that which deals with true Religious Studies (*shin no shūkyōgaku* 真の宗教学) and that which should be held as the true teachings (*makoto no shū* まことの宗) . . . When one inquires as to what kind of application this form of scholarship has, we can say that this is a form of learning that clarifies the teachings of the real self (*hontō no jiko* 本当の自己) . . . Recently, it is often said that philosophers do not study philosophy but philosophize. [Similarly, in the latter sense of this term,] one does not study Shin thought but one does it (*Shinshūgaku shiteyuku* 真宗学してゆく).<sup>62</sup>

Kaneko offered a similar point of view in his Kantian-sounding *Shinshūgaku josetsu* 真宗学序説 (Prolegomena to Shin Buddhist Studies).<sup>63</sup> Kaneko argued that Shin Buddhist Studies should not be consigned to “studying the writings of Shinran” through a purely sectarian form of exegesis but should strive to emulate “Shinran’s [own] method of inquiry.”<sup>64</sup> From both of these passages we can note how the doctrinal modernist position differed from more traditional sectarian views in that it held that the goal of Shin Buddhist Studies was not merely to defend and respect the sacred past—the letter of the text and the denomination’s founders—but to think in the spirit of Shinran in order to address the present.

The elderly Murakami disagreed. Returning to the “The Higashi Honganji Heresy Problem,” he remarked that although Kaneko was a scholar, “he had yet to fully understand the teachings of Shin Buddhism.” It may seem odd that Murakami, a former professor of Tokyo Imperial University and someone who had been on the receiving end of sectarian intellectual censure, was now arguing that Kaneko was unsuited for teaching because of his unconventional ideas concerning Shin doctrine. For the elderly Murakami, it was not “philosophy, science, English, and German [i.e., what was being taught

<sup>62</sup> Kaneko 1926, pp. 2–3.

<sup>63</sup> This and the following passage are also cited in Miharū 1990. Although Miharū discusses the question of Shin Buddhist Studies as it applied to Kaneko, he does not address Murakami’s criticisms in detail.

<sup>64</sup> Miharū 1990 cites a reprinted version of this text. The original can be found in Kaneko 1923, p. 22.

at Otani]” that maintained the Shin tradition: it was the faithful who assembled at Honganji. But what then was the goal of the sectarian university, if not a place where scholars advanced doctrine and challenged their students? In this article, we read that Murakami once visited a Tenrikyō 天理教 school (*shihan gakkō* 師範学校) and was deeply moved when informed that this was a place “designed not to create scholars, but to raise devout followers who could spread” the Tenri message. Unfortunately, Otani’s mission was “not to create devout followers” but rather was designed to “destroy the teachings” of the Shin denomination, which had been “maintained for the last 700-some years,” and to employ “dangerous” men as professors.<sup>65</sup>

On June 16, 1928, Murakami, while recuperating from illness at Shizuoka’s Shuzen-ji 修善寺 hot springs, submitted the aforementioned “Open Letter” to the *Chūgai nippō*.

Kaneko, I have yet to openly discuss your theories that are now in question. You have written the *Jōdo no kannen*, which I have yet to read. All that I have in front of me is a pen and paper. Thus, in observing your ideas, I can only go by what has been printed in recent newspapers, which indicates that you have denied the existence of the Pure Land . . . When I was president of Otani University, I had the chance to read a paper you wrote in the magazine *Butsuza*. Comparing this paper with what is being printed in the newspapers, I’m afraid that this must be . . . If this is the case, you are no longer a Shin priest. That someone who is no longer a Shin priest teaches Shin Buddhist Studies as a professor of Otani University is not appropriate . . . Although you are part of the Shin denomination, just why do you deny the existence of the Pure Land? Where did such ideas come from? I assume that you have read a little of the *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄 of Yongming Yanshou 永明延寿, his *Wanshan tonggui ji* 万善同歸集, and his *Weijin xue* 唯心訣. Or perhaps you came up with these ideas after reading the *Jingtu huowen* 淨土或問 of old master Tienru 天如 and Kiyozawa Manshi’s *Shūkyō*

<sup>65</sup> Murakami’s use of language such as “dangerous” men coincides with a broader suspicion and crackdown in Japanese society on Marxist, Anarchist, and Leftist intellectuals who were deemed to be espousing “dangerous ideas” (*kiken shisō* 危険思想). Specifically, I am thinking of the Morito 森戸 (Tokyo Imperial University, 1920), Kawakami 河上 (Kyoto Imperial University, 1928), and Takikawa Incidents 滝川事件 (Kyoto Imperial University, 1933).

*tetsugaku gaikotsu* 宗教哲学骸骨 (Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion). You have just taken the cream of those of antiquity and mixed things around a bit to make it taste new and interesting, so that it appeals to the youth of today! What you are teaching is nothing but a rehash of what was written more than a thousand years ago. From my point of view, there is nothing unique about what you are doing at all! Kiyozawa was indeed a philosophical genius, but he was not a Shin scholar . . . Zen master Zhijue 智学 (Yongming Yanshou) and old master Tienru were members of the Zen denomination and, hence, they are not suitable as sources for promoting Shin doctrine.

Along with decrying the contaminating influence of philosophy, Shin conservative or traditionalist lines of argument against the modernist position often reverted to accusations that their opponents had fallen into the error of the belief in the Pure Land as a mere state of mind. In this line of argument, the conservative Shin critic used a long-standing scheme by which heretics were equated with the Tendai and Zen tradition of seeing the Pure Land and Amida as being products of the mind-only doctrine (i.e., the well-known *yuishin jōdo koshin mida* 唯心浄土己心弥陀 coupling).<sup>66</sup>

Kaneko admitted that some of his writings contained passages that could be construed as having a “self-nature and mind-only-like flair” (*jishōteki yuishinteki shikisai* 自性的唯心的色彩) to them; but, in fact, if the reader grasped what he was really saying, this would lead to actually being “emancipated from self-nature and mind-only”<sup>67</sup> fallacies. Again, though,

<sup>66</sup> The *locus classicus* for this criticism is the following passage from the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

As I reflect, I find that our attainment of shinjin arises from the heart and mind with which Amida Tathāgata selected the Vow, and that the clarification of true mind has been taught for us through the skillful works of compassion of the Great Sage, Sakyamuni. But the monks and laity of this latter age and the religious teachers of these times are floundering in concepts of “self-nature” and “mind-only,” and they disparage the true realization of enlightenment in the Pure Land Way. Or lost in the self-power attitude of meditative and non-meditative practices, they are ignorant of true shinjin, which is diamondlike.

I have used Hirota’s translation. <<http://www.shinranworks.com/majorexpositions/kgssIII-preface.htm>> (14 January 2006).

<sup>67</sup> Kaneko Dai-ichi, “Koshin no jōdo to saihō no jōdo” 己心の浄土と西方の浄土, *Chūgai nippō*, June 23, 1929.



conservatives were less interested in entering into debate concerning the finer points of their opponent's texts; instead, what we find is an attempt to delimit discourse through subsuming heterogeneity and complexity into formulae based on traditional classifications of heresy. The epitome of this school of heretical thought for conservatives was Kiyozawa. In his argument, Murakami followed a similar tack: Kiyozawa was indeed a noteworthy "philosopher," but his project had little to do with Shin Buddhism.<sup>68</sup> As we will see, this same line of attack was used against Kaneko.

Having finally gotten around to actually reading Kaneko's two works, Murakami published two of his own: *Shinshū no shinmenboku wa nahen ni zonsuru ka* and *Gakan shinshū*. Both are similar in that they provided a broad outline of what Murakami held to be the true teachings of Shin Buddhism and, vis-à-vis, the problem with Kaneko's work. As it lays out Murakami's argument in the most clear and complete fashion, I will begin with his final work, *Gakan shinshū*. Murakami began by prefacing what he held to be the proper role of the Shin thinker and Shin Buddhist Studies.

I have heard that the term "contemporary Shin Buddhist research" (*Shinshū no gendaiteki kenkyū* 真宗の現代的研究) is recently popular in Kyoto academic circles. But I have a hard time figuring out just what this means. If this is an attempt to make old Shin Buddhism anew, then *Gakan shinshū* must be called "antiquated research" (*kodai kenkyū* 古代研究). By "antiquated" research, however, I do not mean that we should be forcibly held prisoner to antiquated methods. [What I mean] is that we must not forget the long historical precedence [of Shin Buddhism].<sup>69</sup>

The next section of this work is straightforwardly entitled "'Gakan shinshū' wa Kaneko-kun no shosetsu to airezu" 「我観真宗」は金子君の所説と相容れず (My View of Shinshū is not Compatible with Kaneko's Theories). This incompatibility was based on the fact that Kaneko's work failed to take into account (1) historical thought and (2) the teachings of Shin Buddhism.<sup>70</sup> By

<sup>68</sup> Tada Kanae made a similar argument when he noted that Kiyozawa's Tathāgata was "the God of modern Western philosophy and also the Christian God—but not Amida Buddha" (*Seiyō no kinsei tetsugakusha no kami de ari, mata tenmei de atte, Amida butsu dewa nai* 西洋の近世哲学者の神であり、又天命であって、阿弥陀仏ではない). See Tada 1991, p. 167.

<sup>69</sup> Murakami 1929, pp. 1–2.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

citing the need to consider “historical thought,” Murakami appears to be arguing that one must understand the varying temporal conditions through which religious ideas and doctrine are formed. In fact, however, what I believe he is really saying is that one should respect the weight and authority of the past, and the great men who inhabit it. In the case of Japanese Buddhism, for example, we are told: “In antiquity, the rise of Buddhism was made possible by the charismatic power of Shōtoku Taishi 聖德太子. The four-hundred-year-long Buddhism of the Heian period was maintained by the charismatic power of Saichō 最澄 and Kūkai 空海.” Further, Kamakura Buddhism was founded on the “charismatic powers of the various masters like Eisai 榮西, Dōgen 道元, Genkū 源空 (Hōnen 法然), Shinran, and Nichiren 日蓮.” Finally, he states: “The great Shin denomination was formed (and became a great Japanese religion) through the power of one person . . . This was the holy sage Shinran. Those who study Shin Buddhism must realize this, and that there is no need to foolishly take up philosophical thought and contaminate these teachings.”<sup>71</sup>

Accordingly, Kaneko’s second mistake was that he confused philosophy with these teachings. He also confused “free inquiry” with “doctrinal research.” Murakami explained, “In particular, free inquiry should be welcomed at such places as the imperial universities. At the private sectarian universities, however, I believe that we must put special emphasis on doctrinal research.”<sup>72</sup>

But Kaneko failed to understand this. Instead of being versed in and teaching orthodox doctrine (the “fundamental teachings of Shinran”), Kaneko was like a man attempting to “construct a house who has no ground upon which to build it—and no lumber either.” What, then, were these teachings that Kaneko had yet to grasp? Simply put, he had failed to see that “in terms of Shin doctrine, the Western Pure Land and the Amida Tathāgata exist.”<sup>73</sup> In another passage, Murakami again emphasized the need for “recognizing that the existence of the Western Pure Land and Amida Tathāgata are the teachings of Shin Buddhism, and the fundamental principles upon which Shin Buddhism is based.”<sup>74</sup> How, one may wonder, did Murakami now account for this existence? Murakami’s answer to the question was simple: one doesn’t account, one believes.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 19–20.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

Science is based on the principle of the indestructibility of matter. Physics is based on the principle of the existence of atoms. Chemistry is based on the principle of the existence of the elements. Even if we cannot understand [the ultimate nature of] atoms and the elements, this is not something [that science] attempts to question. As long as one works within the realm of physics and chemistry, one has no responsibility to question this. To give another example, Christianity is based on the existence of God and the existence of Heaven. Just as questioning the existence of atoms and the elements is not the responsibility of science, but for philosophers to ask, the problem of the existence of Heaven and God is also something to be left up to the philosophers. That we say that Amida Tathāgata exists in the Western Pure Land is the principle upon which the Pure Land teachings are founded. From the beginning, Amida, like the Christian God, is not a historical figure. Like the Christian Heaven, the Pure Land is not an actual place on Earth. Hence, we do not need to hold that we are responsible for exploring the question of [the Pure Land and Amida's] existence.<sup>75</sup>

The simplistic and self-serving take on science and Christianity aside, at least three points are worth noting. Firstly, much like his former conservative critics, Murakami was now arguing for the autonomous and inviolable existence of two discrete spheres of discourse: intellectual or academic inquiry and religious belief. Philosophers and scholars had every right to do what they did, but such pushing and probing was not amiable to the Shin tradition.

Secondly, there is nothing here to suggest that the elderly Murakami had finally decided that the Pure Land and Amida Tathāgata existed, at least not in the standard sense of the word. As I read him, Murakami's final take on this question was that if one were a Shin follower and truly believed in Shin teachings, then they would know that Shin doctrine held that the Pure Land and Amida existed. Push this question further and one misses the point.

Thirdly, the argument that such fruitless ontological questioning leads us nowhere is in many ways similar to what Kaneko was arguing as well. The two parted ways—as we have seen, however—on the issue of what kind of methodology and language was appropriate for overcoming this misdirected inquiry. For Kaneko, the question of how these beliefs could make sense in

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53.

light of philosophy and science was of increasing import; for Murakami, at least in his final writings, it was not.

We encounter this same divergence of opinion in *Shinshū no shinmenboku wa nahan ni zonsuru ka*. In his introduction, Murakami conceded that, like Kiyozawa's elaborations, there was a certain validity to Kaneko's writings: they were philosophically engaging. The problem, though, was that they were not "religious" in nature. Rhetorically, Murakami asked, "On one hand, if we regard these works as being an espousal of Kaneko's philosophical views in regard to Buddhism, then these are not bad works at all; they are excellent writings. Why would I go out of my way to oppose something like this?" It is only when these books were "seen as being expositions of Shin Buddhist Studies" that Murakami had "a great many objections." Notably, "they confuse philosophy with religion."<sup>76</sup> As in *Gakan shinshū*, the septuagenarian Murakami had no problem with philosophy—just as, thirty-some years prior, his critics had had no quarrel with his own writings (in that they were restricted to their proper academic place)—but, again, this was not what Shin priests engaged in.

Murakami further explained his quarrel with Kaneko's works by citing five main transgressions found therein:

- (1) Discrepancies between Kaneko's personal beliefs and the school's teachings (*jikyō sōi no ayamachi* 自教相違の過)
- (2) Destruction of these teachings (*kyōsō hakai no ayamachi* 教相破壊の過)
- (3) Confusing philosophy and religion (*tetsugaku shūkyō kondō no ayamachi* 哲学宗教混同の過)
- (4) Not considering the sacred teachings (*shōgyōryō o kaeriminu ayamachi* 聖教量を顧みぬ過)
- (5) Denying the unique characteristics of Shinshū (*Shinshū no tokushoku o namisuru ayamachi* 真宗の特色を無みする過)<sup>77</sup>

Although I will not belabor these criticisms in depth, it suffices to say that we again encounter the argument that Kaneko had fallen into the theory of "mind-only" and held an unhealthy obsession with modernizing Shin thought at the expense of tradition. Kaneko, according to Murakami, considered traditional Shin doctrine to be "nonsense," "insufficient [for the modern world], and that

<sup>76</sup> Murakami 1928, pp. 4–5.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17.

it “did not have currency with today’s youth.” But Murakami warned that “even if such thought does not have currency,” changing the teachings of the individual Buddhist denominations to suit the contemporary world and modern youth would lead to the “destruction of the denominations.”<sup>78</sup> Murakami ended one attack on Kaneko in the following manner.

As long as the Shin teachings are maintained and exist, one should never speak of Amida and the Pure Land as being of this very mind. Accordingly, works like *Jōdo no kannen* and *Shinshū ni okeru nyorai oyobi jōdo no kannen* are the same as those theories that promote the theory of “self-nature” and “mind-only.” One should have no doubt as to whether or not such teachings work with our Shin Buddhism [i.e., they do not].<sup>79</sup>

Having disparaged Kaneko and defended the centrality of traditional doctrine, Murakami’s work then took a meander through what he held to be the doctrinal crux of these teachings. It is the conclusion to his work, however, that concerns us here.

Looking back on my life, I was born in a Shin temple and, thus, from a young age was infused with Shin faith by my family. When I was older, I entered the Takakura Seminary and, more or less, mastered Shin Buddhist Studies . . . When I reached middle age, I lived in the metropolis of Tokyo, where I absorbed the social milieu of the day, learned from contemporary scholars, and had intellectual exchange with young people. To put it another way, I was taken in by the beliefs of middle-class society (*chūryū shakai* 中流社会) and sought to identify myself with these ideas. Hence, I thought much like Kaneko does now. I believed that everything was pointless unless it agreed with contemporary thought . . . To be honest, I myself held that there was something lacking in Shin Buddhism . . . When I recall this now, I am terribly ashamed. It was from this way of thinking that I wrote the first part (*dai ippen* 第一篇) of the *Bukkyō tōitsuron*.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 21–22.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 90–91.

In a separate passage, Murakami argued that philosophy was something done for the sake of “the elite” (*kōkyū no hito* 高級の人) and “modern youth” (*gendai no seinenhai* 現代の青年輩).<sup>81</sup> In contradistinction, it was the teachings of Shinran—who “sacrificed his entire being” and lived among the “dregs of society” (*saiteikyū no rōnyakunannyo* 最低級の老若男女)—and Rennyo that were meant for the lowest classes (*saikakyū no mono* 最下級の者) and the depraved (*iyashiki* 卑き). And it is here, Murakami wrote, that we encounter “the true identity of Shin Buddhism.”<sup>82</sup> The elderly Murakami’s Shin Buddhism was a religion for the weak, the marginalized, and those who had been washed aside by the tides of modernity. Shin Buddhism was, in many ways, also a teaching for those on the verge of death. The question as to whether or not Shin teachings led to a kind of existential path of awakening in the here-and-now (what doctrinal modernists often called *genzai anjin* 現在安心) or to postmortem salvation in the next (what more traditional-minded Shin thinkers referred to as *mirai anjin* 未来安心) was one of the central points of contention in the doctrinal debates of the modern period.<sup>83</sup> The elderly Murakami was situated somewhere in the middle. Although he scoffed at what he saw as the philosophical excesses of young priests and their misguided attempts to turn Shin Buddhism into an existential movement, he never committed himself to arguing for the physical existence of the Pure Land and the possibility of posthumous Buddhahood. Still, though, near the end, he argued that Shin teachings would make little sense to those who had yet to “experience death” (*shi no jikken ga nai hito* 死の実験がない人). He, however, had.

I became gravely ill in September of last year. At one point the doctor told me that I was going to die. It was so grave that even the newspapers reported I had reached the end. So to speak, I was a man who had entered the gates of death and [yet] returned. Thus, I was able to know what it is like when a person dies. When I reached this point, I was, for the first time, able to understand the value of

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* In this same section, Murakami did qualify his argument by recalling that “someone” once told him that you either had to be “really wise” or one of “the unintelligent of the lowest classes” to understand the Shin teachings. I assume that Murakami included himself in the former group.

<sup>83</sup> I have written on this problem in some detail in Ward 2005.

the teaching of the Other Power; I now understood that faith in Shin Buddhism is gained in just such a case; I was now aware that when one is faced with such a situation that *zazen* is useless, ideas (*kan-nen*) are useless, and the belief in birth in the Pure Land through the correct thought at the moment of death and the ensuing arrival of the Pure Land saints is useless.<sup>84</sup>

With age, and the looming specter of his own death (whose clutches he had narrowly avoided only months prior), Murakami turned his back on earlier attempts at reworking Shin doctrine so that it was compatible with “contemporary thought” and so that the idea of the Pure Land and Amida Tathāgata somehow made sense in the master narrative of Buddhist unity. All of this had become mere apologetics made in a moment of youthful folly (or middle-aged folly, perhaps). The teachings of Shin Buddhism were the teachings of Shin Buddhism; nothing else was needed—not *zazen*, philosophy, or Buddhist unity—nor could these teachings help those who had arrived at the gates of death.

### *Concluding Thoughts*

As many of the articles in this issue have touched upon, Murakami Senshō—along with Inoue Enryō and others—was at the forefront of the late-Meiji attempt to forge a discourse on the unity of Buddhism. I, however, have been less concerned with this emergent discourse and Murakami’s place in it *per se*. Instead, it is the reactions to works like the *Bukkyō tōitsuron* that I first turned to. Murakami’s writings did indeed open up a new horizon by which to view Buddhism; but, along with his political allegiances in mid-life, these writings also provided a point of attack through which sectarian consciousness could be redefined and deepened.

By complicating matters with the writings and reactions of these sectarian-minded thinkers, and with often overlooked institutional realities (where traditional deployments of power often still held sway), we can begin to imagine how future attempts at understanding this period and its intellectual currents will have to take into account a great deal of material which has hitherto been, consciously or not, avoided. We may find it difficult to offer our sympathies to the reactionary nature of many of these thinkers, but this does not absolve us of the task of understanding their place in the history of modern Japanese Buddhism.

<sup>84</sup> Murakami 1928, p. 95.

As the writings of the elderly Murakami make clear, however, my well-intentioned introduction of these conveniently binary heuristics are problematic in their own right. It was not the sectarian-minded opponents of the *Bukkyō tōitsuron* who offered the final condemnation of it: it was Murakami himself. We may indeed find it fruitful to view the struggle between doctrinal modernists and their sectarian-minded conservative rivals as a dialectic interaction through which a broader and more complicated notion of Japanese Buddhist modernity was being formed. The points where these dialectical distinctions become muddled or fall apart should be of interest as well.

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