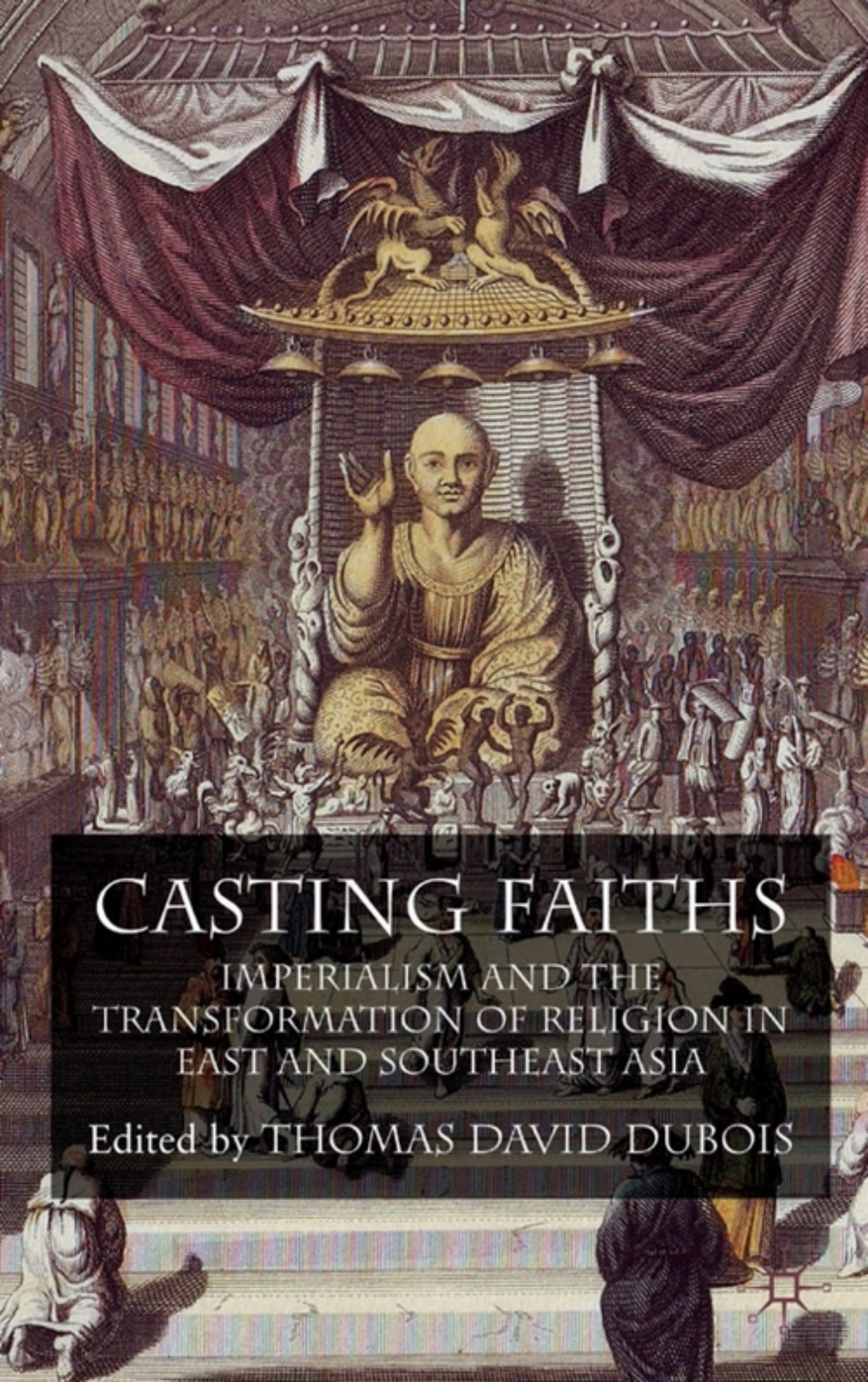


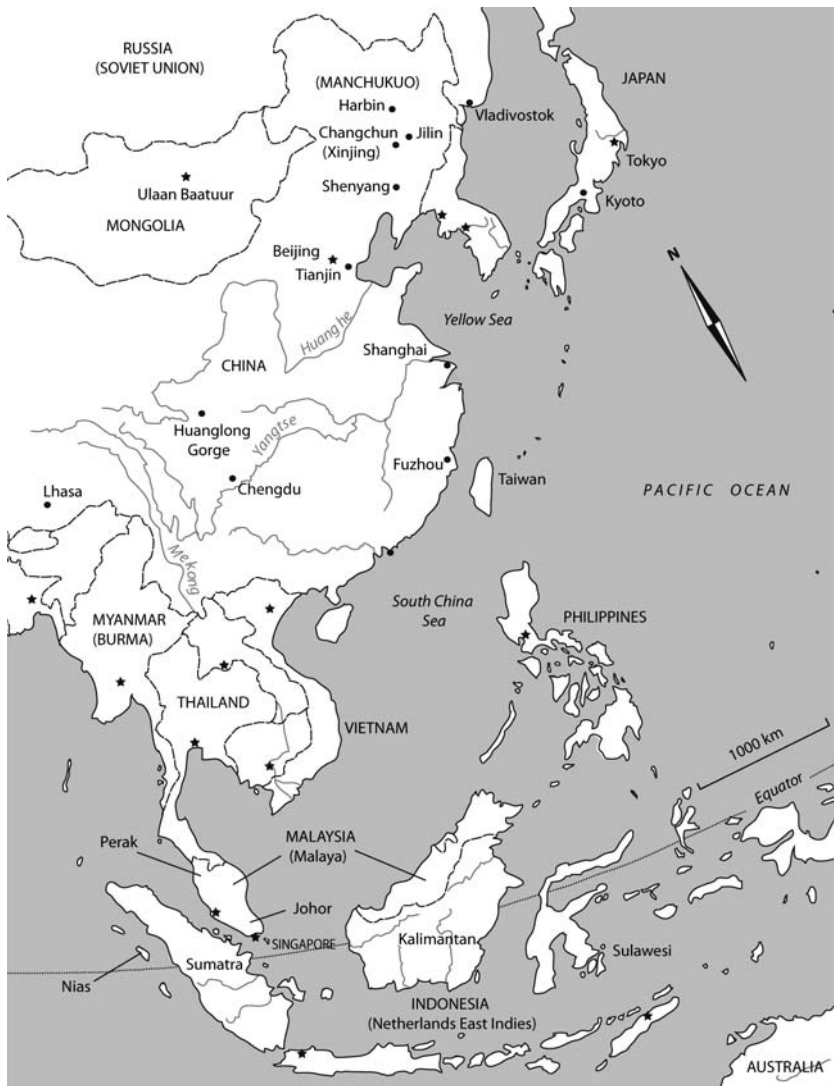


CASTING FAITHS

IMPERIALISM AND THE
TRANSFORMATION OF RELIGION IN
EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Edited by THOMAS DAVID DUBOIS

Casting Faiths



East and Southeast Asia. Historical names are shown in parentheses.

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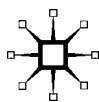
Imperialism and the Transformation of Religion in East and Southeast Asia

Edited by

Thomas David DuBois

Associate Professor of History, National University of Singapore

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Editorial matter, selection, introduction and chapter 10

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Preface

In June of 2005, Dr Maitrii Aung-Thwin and myself invited 18 scholars from four continents to the National University of Singapore to help us answer a deceptively simple question: what is “religion” in Asia?

Like most of the other participants, Maitrii and I had read the works of scholars such as Talal Asad, who had shown how religion as a social institution, as a unit of analysis, and a subject of law and scholarship was historically constituted, and moreover was biased towards Western, specifically Christian criteria. We had found these ideas compelling enough, but as historians of Southeast and East Asia, respectively, we also felt that they presented two important weaknesses.

First, much of what had been written about the idea of religion was concerned primarily with discourse: the clash, manipulation, or accommodation of words and ideas. It is true that in the history of Asia, the study of discourse cannot be separated from the reality of Western imperialism, especially because many Western ideas (not just religious, but political and social as well) were introduced to Asia at gunpoint. Yet just as important as words are the ideas that are inherent in practices, and many of these “social technologies” that continue to exert a tremendous influence on Asian societies—practices such as mass marketing, national education, and ethnic census taking—developed at precisely the same time that ideas of religion were taking on a global scale. Moreover, although many of these practices, and the ideologies they created, were initiated by Western imperialism, the techniques themselves long outlived it. If we focused on these practices as well as discourse, might we see native actors as agents of change rather than its victims? Could such a perspective allow us to link processes that were initiated by imperialism to the Asia we see today?

Second, much of what has been written on the historical exchange of ideas has focused exclusively on single relationships, especially one between colonizer and colonized: Britain and India, France and the Levant, the United States and Philippines, etc. However, such a focus can cause us to overlook the web of lateral networks between colonies. What might we see if we instead focused on the regional context, juxtaposing the experiences of East and Southeast Asia? Not only would this perspective demonstrate the degree of integration within the region as a whole, it would also highlight the role of imperialism by comparing the formally colonized countries of Southeast Asia to the fading Chinese empire and the short-lived Japanese one.

We knew that we could not answer these questions alone. The scholars who joined us in Singapore included specialists in anthropology and literature, history and art history, law and religion, with expertise spanning a region from Japan to Tibet to Indonesia. This volume represents some of the best scholarship

from that very learned group, revised and expanded by the authors to incorporate what we learned from each other in the course of our discussions. In addition to these authors, I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by the other participants of the workshop, many of whom have published their papers elsewhere: Maitrii Aung-Thwin, Carolyn Brewer, Jan van der Puten, Webb Keane, Ya-pei Kuo, Rebecca Nedostup, Arskal Salim, Martin Slobodnik, and Timothy Tsu Yun Hui.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Maitrii for helping to coordinate the original conference, to the National University of Singapore for hosting it, and especially to the Asia Research Institute, who generously supported the event. Colleagues in the History Department, especially Bruce Lockhart and Yang Bin, have provided valuable advice and support. In addition, I would like to extend my thanks to the book contributors for their patience with my numerous editorial demands, and for their moral support as we took the text to publication.

As always, the last word of thanks is reserved for Misako Suzuki.

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1

Introduction: The Transformation of Religion in East and Southeast Asia—Paradigmatic Change in Regional Perspective

Thomas DuBois

In 1982, the sociologist Jonathan Z. Smith famously called religion a “product of the scholars’ study.”¹ That it certainly is, but it is equally a product of state regulation, legal rulings, the neighborhood PTA, the news media, and lest we forget, of its preachers, believers, saints and charlatans. What one might identify as “religion” is always a shifting entity, composed of a variety of ideas, discourses and interests. Even a single religious tradition comprises a variety of actors and voices, and when a change occurs, it concerns not only the ecclesiastical elite, but also each of these levels as well.

Consider some of the many choices that shape religion today, such as whether to consecrate homosexual bishops in the Anglican Church or to ordain women into the Catholic priesthood. Officially, the final word in such decisions is that of a small group of high-level church leaders who shape doctrine, based largely, if not exclusively, on interpretation of an internal tradition of scripture and precedent.² However, their considerations are also shaped by the opinions of their own lay faithful, and by external forces, such as the law of the land, and political and social pressures from a wide variety of interest groups outside the church. The exact relationship between these internal and external forces (in other words, between church and society), is itself mediated by a number of structural factors, such as the inclusivity of theological debate, the ability of different public advocacy groups to organize and recruit effectively, and to express their views freely and the intrusiveness of official political power into the process.

Broadly speaking, religious change occurs at these three levels: society, theology and the structural context, which I will refer to as technology. Of course, these categories are not absolute. Although the secular and the religious are often treated in opposition to each other, it is of somewhat limited use to seek any substantive distinction between the two. Rather than asking whether theology evolves to reflect society or the reverse, I see the two as two sides of

2 Introduction

the same coin, with simultaneous change to both of these realms often initiated by the technologies through which the two interact. Used in this sense, technology refers simply to how things are done—ways of ruling, educating, organizing and communicating—and to the ideological agendas these practices invariably bring.³ New technologies create new realities and possibilities, instigating a cascade of effects on society, theology and the relationship between the two. Returning to one of the examples cited above, it is by no means new for certain people within and outside of the Catholic Church to support the ordination of women into the priesthood. What does change is the context in which it all takes place. Compared to one or two hundred years earlier, current debates within Western theology are fundamentally different because (among other reasons) they are now far-more inclusive. Not only do opinions on all sides reach millions worldwide by television, newspaper and the Internet but, perhaps more importantly, many of those so reached have been educated in national schools, and taught to channel their political and social activism into a florescence of highly specialized advocacy networks.

This volume will examine how this triad of influences combined to transform the definition, practice and social significance of religion in East and Southeast Asia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The choice to combine East and Southeast Asia is significant. Despite their proximity, the two regions are rarely discussed together, and indeed there is a great deal to separate them. Speaking in the broadest possible terms, East Asia belongs to a generally Sinic world, mainland Southeast Asia owes its greatest debt to Indian culture, and island Southeast Asia also to India and China, but also Islam, as well. Yet this entire region, covering an area from Japan to Burma to Indonesia, has been linked for centuries by commercial, political and demographic, as well as religious networks, as well as a degree of artistic, linguistic and ritual interaction significant enough to greatly compromise any idea of absolute cultural boundaries.⁴ In more recent times, the history of the region was bound by a series of shared experiences: the multifarious impact of Western imperialism during nineteenth century, joined in Asia by American and Japanese ventures in the twentieth, and successive waves of globalization in the postcolonial era. Here we are presented with yet another fundamental divide; while most of Southeast Asia was formally colonized by European powers, East Asia for the most part was not. However, such a divide is itself misleading; even those areas that were never directly colonized were still heavily influenced by a variety of Western ideas and models—it could be argued that the reason why countries such as Japan escaped colonization is essentially that they became European.⁵ The question then is whether the long-term history of this region is simply a process by which local identities and ideas were replaced by global, and in particular Western ones.

In terms of religion, many would say that it was, and that as a result, a fundamentally European definition of religion now lies at the center of a hegemonic world discourse. The discourse itself is generally construed in one of two

ways, as being modeled either on post-Enlightenment Christianity, or on secular modernism. For the former, the civilizing drive of imperialism (and of the globalized culture left in its wake) was fundamentally inseparable from the ideas and institutions of Christianity. Knowingly or not, a variety of European imperialists took Christianity as a model for religion and its place in society, such that native religions were forced to adapt and recast themselves in a Christian image. Missionaries were naturally at the forefront of this process, holding up religion as a path not only to personal salvation but also to civilizational reform, dazzling the unsaved with what one scholar has called the “evangelical modernity” of the Christian West.⁶ Even when sympathetic to native religion, colonial administrators and jurists created and enforced categories in deciding what constituted real religion, granting secular authority to certain religious structures, while denying it to others. The academic study of religion (especially the comparative study of “world religions”) itself developed out of Christian theological apology, and despite its later pretensions to scientific objectivity, retained racial and cultural trajectories of progress that ranked religions according to their degree of development.⁷ Not surprisingly, these would place Protestant Christianity at the pinnacle of religious evolution, interpreting the founding figures, teachings, rituals and scriptures (or lack thereof) of what they considered advanced religions such as Buddhism, or hopelessly backwards ones, such as Hinduism, through this same matrix of Christocentric criteria.⁸ This legacy is so pervasive that some have persuasively questioned the validity of the discipline altogether.⁹

The second of the two models, otherwise known as secularization theory, says simply that with ever-advancing progress of science, the light of reason and a new, all-encompassing role for the state, the arrival of the modern world gradually overwhelmed and marginalized religion. Beginning with the controversies surrounding the likes of Galileo, a variety of discoveries increasingly called scripture into question as a literal expression of scientific and historical truth (more than astronomy, the evolutionary implications of paleontology seemed to have been the real spirit breaker, as it were). More fundamentally, the overwhelming confidence in empiricism and reason characteristic especially of the late nineteenth century denigrated subjective belief in other realms, as well. For inveterate modernists such as Max Weber, the heart of Western superiority lay precisely in the ability of its rational institutions of administration to operate free of ideology.¹⁰ At the same time, the state came to occupy something resembling a religious role. The rise of citizen nationalism redefined local and ethnic identities, and secularized religious ones, subverting both to a tier of secondary significance, and transferring the air of sacrality and transcendence from religious institutions to what Renan famously termed the “spiritual principle” of the nation.¹¹ The hegemony of this modernist complex did not destroy religion, but rather pushed it out of public life, and relegated it to the private spheres of the home, and individual conscience.¹² According to this theory, such processes took shape within Europe of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and quickly spread throughout the world. They continue to serve as a basis

for misunderstanding when, for example, the United States insists that nations adhere to a definition of personal religious freedom that derives from these ideas.¹³

Leaving aside the question of world hegemony for a moment, it is clear that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did see sweeping changes to the concept of religion in Western discourse, and that many of the changes to European thought were in fact prompted by imperialism. Colonial rule bureaucratized vast expanses of daily life, at home and in overseas possessions, requiring a standard understanding of religion that would apply across cultures. Needless to say, this process of standardization was also one of reification. Perhaps the greatest change to the European understanding of religion came as a result of Christian mission. In contrast to the Iberian clerical missions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the wave of lay missionary activity of the late nineteenth century was itself a very new phenomenon, a new form of Christianity that had its roots in the vast changes undergone by European society during the intervening period. The call to mission that first swept Europe and the United States in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was in many cases prompted by social reform movements at home, what might be thought of as the internal mission of the lower classes. In England, fears of Jacobin ideals crossing the Channel prompted a new attention to the welfare of the laborer, who was suddenly faced with a plethora of temperance societies, Sunday schools and moral legislation. The moral plight of the working classes was often compared to that of the heathen in newly acquired overseas possessions, who were suddenly discovered to be living in darkness and in need of salvation in the most urgent way.¹⁴ Missionary piety was itself also a reflection of opportunity. Imperialism brought the world home to Europe; through a variety of products and images, the world came literally into the sitting rooms of the emergent middle class. This new knowledge, and the opportunities created by expanding European power itself created a new wave of interest in spreading the gospel overseas (although without significant formal colonies, American and Canadian missionaries were also very active overseas, and an obvious parallel can be drawn with the missionization of the American frontier), what might be described as a “supply-side” explanation for the explosion in popular piety.¹⁵ Even when they were not especially successful overseas, these new missionary societies radically transformed Christianity at home, presenting new modes of organization, and a new “relationship between civilization and piety, between social transformation and individual conversion.”¹⁶

However, the fact that such developments first occurred in Europe and were carried on the winds of expanding European influence should not be taken to as evidence of a simple imposition of Western ideology. Naturally, those holding the reins of political, military and commercial dominance did voice their ideas with a greater, but by no means complete authority. During the nineteenth century, the political elites of the colonies, the social institutions of well-backed Christian missions and the scholarly societies of European metropolises would

all exert a disproportionate influence throughout Asia, as would their images of what religion was and should be. Yet, focusing exclusively on these elite portrayals, as did Edward Said with *European Orientalism*, without examining how these images were received and understood, runs the risk of assuming that the “positional superiority” of Europe in the colonies translated into absolute discursive authority.¹⁷ Clearly it did not. While European actors may have had a dominant position in the process of defining culture, civilization and progress, they were by no means alone in it. Nor were they unaffected. Just as the expansion of overseas mission changed the nature of European Christianity, the globalized culture that emerged from imperialism was a dialogic process that shaped both observer and observed. If the English came to see their Indian colonies as exotic, yet backward and mired in superstition, the reverse view saw the English as rational and secular yet lacking in spirituality; the two images reinforced and created each other in an “interactional” exchange that equally involved London and Delhi.¹⁸

Moreover, the discourses of the powerful could be quickly turned against them. Even if ideas such as “civilization,” “enlightenment” or the ever-maligned “modernity” became hegemonic in the Gramscian sense—as concepts they retained a universal validity in an increasingly global discourse of political legitimacy and social progress—their precise content remained beyond the power of any one party to dictate.¹⁹ Certainly by the beginning of the twentieth century, a critical number of elites throughout the world had become wholly conversant in these ideas, and were very able to accept, reject or manipulate them. In communication with each other, subjects from throughout the colonial and postcolonial world could hear ideals of Christian brotherhood, Wilsonian self-determination, or free market access and complain to each other that the West was failing to live up to its own rhetoric.²⁰ Moreover, the reach and longevity of these concepts derives from precisely this type of ambiguity, and many of the watchwords that drove imperialism also retained their currency in postcolonial political discourse, even when it physically circumvented or opposed the West. At the first meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1955, Anwar el Sadat closed one of many speeches expressing opposition to Western domination with a call for “justice, equity, liberty and peace,” words that could have just as easily come from the mouth of any European political leader of the previous hundred and fifty years.²¹

Yet, the globalization initiated by European imperialism did transform the world, and far more than discourse alone, the engine that powered what historian Marshall Hodgson once called the “great Western Transmutation” of the world was technologies of practice.²² Colonial rule introduced new institutions of governance, such as public education, national censuses and a modern military, along with the new configurations of citizenship, ethnicity and national spirit that developed in tandem with them. What is most significant is that these technologies transcended the boundaries of power and outlived the retreat of formal imperialism. Just like they did with Western discourse, later actors subsequently

adopted many of the technologies of rule first put in place during the colonial period. Not only postcolonial states like Malaysia and Indonesia, but also outside admirers, such as the short-lived but deeply influential Japanese empire, directly emulated discourses and techniques of European imperialism.²³ Like the technologies of rule, the organizational and proselytizational technologies of religious mission were adopted by native actors. When they did so, they equally adopted the logic inherent in these techniques—ideas of piety, true conversion and clerical authority (in short, much of what one might consider a transcendental definition of religion) that had developed decades earlier in the missionary transformation of European Christianity.²⁴ Other types of structural change, such as the increasing concentration of specialized knowledge in the hands of academic disciplines, and the global penetration of market mechanisms (what might be thought of as technologies of knowledge and commerce, respectively), not to mention the exponential growth of communications and transportation, each instigated new forms of scientific or social innovation, and each made an impact on the definition and practice of religion on a continental scale.

The tactic of this book is to focus on these techniques by presenting case studies arranged around specific issues within four major themes: scholarship, mission, policy and commerce, each of which is discussed in some detail below. Although we remind the reader to note the use of the plural—various areas, ethnicities, classes and religious groups experienced these changes in very different ways—our thesis is that these represent different manifestations of the same process, one that shaped not only the region, but the entire world, transforming metropolises as much as colonies, the powerful as much as the powerless. That these global transformations were more than simple Western or any other domination can be seen by comparing different configurations of power, between the formal colonization experienced in Southeast Asia, the informal yet no less transformative influence of the Western powers and Japan in East Asia, and the rise of postcolonial states following the Second World War.

Scholarship—Orientalism and the definition of Asian religion

The Orientalist encounter is at its core an issue of knowledge, how ideas and images of self and other are produced, consumed and authenticated, and is often epitomized by Victorian scholarship on Asian religion. For many European writers of the nineteenth century, all that was essential to Asia was expressed in condensed form in its religion, particularly when compared with that of the West. Asian religion was alternately portrayed as decadent or spiritual, primitive or sublime, depending as much as anything else on how the writer felt about particular aspects of Christianity. Through religion more than anything else, armchair anthropologists of the nineteenth century saw themselves and their societies in reflection. The irony is that although many of these authors wrote with a shocking lack of experience or even interest in Asia itself, their portrayals developed an air of authority that mirrored the power of empire; the institutions

of European imperial academia, its scholarly societies, journals and academic titles spoke with a universalizing legitimacy that marginalized Asian traditions and voices. The example, mentioned in the chapter by Judith Snodgrass, of two of the most promising young scholar monks from a major Buddhist institution in Japan who left in 1876 to study Buddhism under Oxford philologist Max Müller, would on the surface seem to represent this process taken to a point of absurdity. Again, the claim is thus made, that on the whole, the Western study of religion stacked the deck against Asian religions. With the concepts, terms and teleologies employed by academics in the study of religion being fundamentally Christian in origin, Asian religions could only be found lacking. Like its authority to speak on the “true” nature of Asian religions, Western academic discourse on the nature and evolution of religion attained a worldwide hegemony, such that the new concepts, terms and biases that it introduced have been unquestioningly accepted by precisely those people to whom they do the greatest disservice.

Two chapters in this volume confront this view. Alexey Kirichenko and Judith Snodgrass discuss the portrayal of Asian religion in colonial Burma and the emerging imperial power of Japan, respectively, each demonstrating the degree of agency enjoyed by native actors to engage and shape the ideas and forms that accompanied Western scholarly discourse. Kirichenko begins, appropriately enough, by examining changing terms used for “religion” in Burmese over the nineteenth century. Throughout Asia, the arrival of Western ideas was reflected in the transformation of language. New terms were coined, often by scholar-missionaries, for such Western uniquely concepts such as democracy, race and religion, a fact that could easily be taken as the baldest proof both of the fundamental foreignness of these concepts (it is not uncommon for Asian scholars reject the term by declaring that their countries have no “religion”), and of the intellectual domination of those Asian languages that adopted them.²⁵ However, the process was hardly so simple. Even when imbued with new meaning, the terms introduced into Chinese and Japanese during this period often had an intellectual genealogy that far predated the Western impact. Legal terms introduced into Japanese had originally come from Tang dynasty (618–907) jurisprudence, the well-traveled term for “revolution” from the political philosopher Mencius (372–289 BCE), and that eventually chosen for “religion” (Ch. *zongjiao*, Jp. *shūkyō*) was employed in Chinese sources as early as the fifth century, here in reference to Buddhism. Moreover, these new terms were themselves coined and employed most extensively by native actors; the creation of political and legal neologisms in nineteenth-century Japan was primarily undertaken by native actors in the interest of treaty revision, and reaccepted into Chinese for the same reason one generation later.²⁶ Kirichenko traces similar processes in Burma, where the precolonial terms equated religion and Buddhism. Although the new, foreign terms for religion were coined by American scholar-missionaries, they were first employed by the anticolonial movement of the Young Men’s Buddhist Association. Rather than domination,

the use of neologisms by native actors demonstrated an adaptation of nationalist movements to use the ideological weapons of the Europeans against them.

Similarly, Judith Snodgrass traces the early career of D. T. Suzuki, perhaps the best-known exponent of Japanese Zen in the West. When Suzuki arrived in the United States, the academic study of Buddhism was firmly a project of philologists, who separated the “true” teaching as recorded in Pali texts, from what they characterized as the degenerate superstition of popular practice.²⁷ This represented not only the Judeo-Christian bias for iconic founders and texts, but also the linguistic basis for the academic hierarchies of Buddhology and Indology. After failed attempts to convince Western readers of the unique value of Japanese Buddhism according to its own criteria, that the teaching of the Buddha evolved through revelation, and that Japan represented the perfection, rather than degeneration of Buddhism, Suzuki accepted the criteria established by his audience. Like the Japanese monks at Oxford a generation earlier, Suzuki joined the Western academy on its own terms, publishing widely in academic journals and gaining respect for his philologically attentive translations. However, like these monks, as well as the Buddhist nationalists in Burma, Suzuki’s apparent acceptance of Western academic institutions was not so much a matter of subjection, as a strategy to subvert the existing paradigm. With his reputation established, he embarked on the task of presenting his characteristic image of Zen, one that was specifically tailored to meet the religious crises being faced by Western audiences.

Mission—Multivalenced meanings of Christianity in Asia

When Christian missionaries arrived in Asia, they brought not only their beliefs, but also a vast array of organizational and proselytizational techniques that reshaped the practice of religion itself. Nor was this influence confined to Asian Christians. Like those of statecraft, the techniques of mission were adopted by native actors because they were effective. When faced with missionaries in their midst, native religious (and later political) actors often responded with what might seem to be characteristically Christian means—by adopting Sunday schools, catechisms, hymnals, lay support groups and, finally, the missionary drive itself.²⁸

The techniques of mission had an implicit ideology that left a deep imprint even in those areas where Christianity itself never took root. The development of sustained Christian mission not only fomented the creation of mission journals and financial support institutions, it also had far deeper theological effects, played out in changing ideas of social transformation and individual piety and as “both indication and cause of a fundamental discursive shift in the relation between religion and politics in the West.”²⁹ Perhaps the most striking contribution of mission Christianity to Asia, the concept of individual conversion, with its emphasis on irreversible personal transformation and religious exclusivity, was a result of this genealogy. Broadly speaking, many of the patterns of

religious affiliation seen in much of precolonial East and Southeast Asia were based more on community than creed, with regimens of practice structured around village temples, sacred sites or clan propriety. In contrast, the notion of conversion associated with nineteenth-century Christian mission presented a new array of idioms—strictly defined sectarian membership, rituals of initiation, a clear concept of the saved and a policy of distancing converts from native tradition, often by segregation into separate communities.³⁰ This notion of transformative conversion and voluntaristic membership engenders a sense of distinctness and destiny among its converts, making it especially attractive to marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities.³¹

At the same time, when Christianity adapted to friendly or unfriendly local circumstances, it was forced to redefine itself and its boundaries in the process. Scholars have shown how Christian missionaries included in their teachings a wide array of ideas—about gender, sexuality, the body, economic productivity and the individuated self—that were not specifically related to theology. As China lurched from crisis to crisis during the early twentieth century, more than a few frustrated reformers gravitated toward Christianity not so much because they believed the religious content, but because the missionaries, particularly the Anglo-American Protestants, seemed to embody all of the social ideals they felt their country so desperately lacked. Missionaries also interacted with commercial networks. John and Jean Comaroff famously portrayed Christian mission in Africa as a way of training the bodily habits of natives for participation in a global “millennial capitalism.”³²

On its own, such scholarship might give the impression that Western missionaries, confident in their own superiority, and backed by the power and prestige of imperialism, simply projected their ideas onto a passive native audience. Clearly, this was not the case. Experience in the field shaped both the practices of evangelism, and the beliefs and sympathies of the missionaries themselves.³³ In this volume, Roberta Wollons traces the conflict over American Christian education in early-twentieth-century Japan to show how the goals and parameters of mission were defined both by the missionaries and by the society in which they worked. She begins in the United States of the mid-nineteenth century, where mistrust of education as a proselytizing technique was beginning to give way to the influence of a new generation of single women missionaries, many of whom had a background in education and were eager for the opportunity to build institutions, such as hospitals, orphanages and especially schools overseas. Annie Howe, who arrived in the Japanese port city of Kobe in 1887, was typical of this new breed of American missionary educators. Howe worked to establish kindergartens that employed the cutting-edge pedagogical techniques she had learned in Chicago, artfully blending the formative content of this new style of education with Christian liberalism. Japanese reformers appreciated and admired Howe’s accomplishments, but as universal education became increasingly tied to their own program of citizen formation, they grew wary of leaving the schools in control of Christians, particularly foreign ones,

and gradually wrested the schools from Howe's control. In this case, at least, formative kindergarten education may have begun as a technique of mission, but an aggressive Japanese response ensured that the socializing content of Howe's pedagogical style would be dissociated from Christianity, and redirected toward nationalist ends.

Changes in missionary attitudes can be seen not only within the lifetime, but even within the mind of a single individual, such as the German missionary and painter Eduard Fries discussed by Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz. Like many of his contemporaries of the late nineteenth century, when Fries arrived on the Indonesian island of Nias, he brought with him a strong Calvinist rejection of religious materiality, and a particular revulsion for what he saw as native "idolatry."³⁴ Two decades of life in the field softened his tone. As he came first to respect native culture, and later to nostalgically mourn its passing, Fries saw native material culture in a more benevolent light. In this sense, Fries was typical of much of his generation, who gravitated toward an understanding of Christianity that was personal and internal, such that they could tolerate certain aspects of native worship, seeing these no longer as idolatry, but as a variant expression of a natural human longing for God. At the same time, this internalization of Christianity was equally conditioned by a modernist sense—just as in places like the Philippines native statuary might once have been reinscribed and resacralized by moving it into the Catholic cathedral, collectors such as Fries' own Missionary Society in Germany came to house ritual objects collected in the field in the ultimate cathedral of imperial modernity—the museum of primitive art.³⁵

For the converted themselves, the creation of Christian communities large and small implied a range of meanings. Just as conversion to Christianity was defined by missionaries and the outside world in a variety of terms—an expression of class, education, industry, purity or (as Jennifer Connolly discusses in a later section) ethnicity—so too was the nature of authority within more established Christian communities conditioned by a number of factors. In his chapter on the 1954 resettlement of Catholic refugees from North Vietnam in the South, Peter Hansen discusses the evolution of clerical authority within these transplanted communities. Historically, the propagation of Christianity in Vietnam had been quite centralized, especially after mid-nineteenth century. In contrast to the diverse and occasionally competing interests faced by Protestant denominations, the dominant portion of Catholic mission within Indochina was conducted by priests affiliated with the Missions Étrangères de Paris, while significant segments of the native Church were organized into orders such as the Amantes de la Croix, which retained close ties to Rome.³⁶ Rather, a combination of political and social factors during the colonial period caused Catholic communities to evolve unique traditions of solidarity and clerical authority: those in the embattled north developing as tighter communities, who were willing to grant far-greater temporal authority to village priests than their southern counterparts. When northern Catholics embarked on their mass exodus over the seventeenth parallel, they were not expected to assimilate into southern

Catholic communities. Instead, a variety of political interests attempted to use the unique nature of clerical authority within northern communities both to control the refugees, and to keep them separate from southern Catholics.

State policy—Religious ethnicity

The role of political institutions in shaping society can take many forms, but is perhaps best seen in the process of creating the categories that society must live with. Like the neologisms discussed above, the crux of the argument is hegemony—that categories originating in control and domination become accepted through habit or time by those who are least served by them. British administration in India, for example, strictly categorized natives by race and religion, at the same time giving a variety of religious laws authority over very particular realms of custom and personal life. Thus, a Hindu or a Muslim was defined by British authorities according to race, rather than by religious belief or preference, and issues such as his divorce, inheritance or marriage were adjudicated according to what colonial authorities recognized as religious law.³⁷ In some cases, such as the formation of “customary law” (*adat*) in the Dutch Indies, the gleaning and systemization of local custom was a decades long intellectual exercise in which colonial scholars took an active part.³⁸ Although British authorities in India rarely intervened directly in the content of native religious law, they did exclude certain aspects of religious custom, the 1829 ban on the practice of widow burning (*sati*) being the most famous, in a way that set moral parameters for what would constitute the legitimate exercise of religion.³⁹ In some places, such as colonial Singapore, civil cases involving religious law might actually be tried by a British judge.⁴⁰ The longevity of these categories is clearly evident in many former British colonies, such as Malaysia and Singapore, in which racially defined religious categories remain the law of the land.

However, although the desire to count, codify and categorize citizens is common to many colonial and postcolonial states, how individuals understand and use these newly dominant categories of race and religion are beyond the control of the state. This is seen in three chapters that discuss the role of the state in the pairing of ethnicity and religious community, and the effect that this has had on ideas of religious identity.

The first begins with the most absolute expression of state policy—the creation of legal codes and structures. In her chapter on colonial Malaya, Iza Hussin shows how the division of power between Malay sultans and British officials necessitated a legal definition of religion. As in India, the ideal was to leave customary matters in the hands of local community leaders, and in this arrangement as well, the realms of religion and custom were to remain the exclusive purview of Malay powerholders. In the broadest sense, British law did remain the overarching authority. When conflict inevitably arose over the precise boundaries of this unique jurisdiction of religion, the entire question was referred to Crown Law. Yet the matter did not stop there. Even if the Crown

now possessed the ability to define religion, as a legal entity, it was still up to the sultans to adjudicate both its content and its relation to sultanic governance. Precisely because their power had been so severely restricted in other realms, the sultans bound their own authority with religion, Islam in particular, in a way that they had never done before. This process would eventually result in the politically and ethnically charged concept of Islamic Law seen in postindependence Malaysia.

A second comes from colonial Indonesia, where Jennifer Connolly discusses the conversion of the highland Dayaks to Christianity. Banned from proselytizing among the majority Muslim Malays, American missions focused their efforts on a diverse group of highland tribes. At the same time, these highlands were themselves being scrutinized by the Dutch colonial government. New policies, such as census-taking and religious registration, categorized subjects in new ways, with much of the highland population lumped together under the name Dayak. These policies and categories were actively employed by the postcolonial state, which further restricted the definition of religion to five monotheistic faiths, within one of which every citizen must be registered as a member. These dual pressures on ethnic and religious definition created new configurations of identities, such that for many, the rather new idea of a single Dayak ethnicity was not only readily accepted, it became inseparable from Christianity. Similar processes can be seen throughout Asia, the process of “secularizing religious identity” observed on the national scale also occurring among its component pieces. In particular among those perceived as minorities, such as increasingly Christian Hmong in Vietnam or Muslim Hui in China, their primordial difference is expressed simultaneously in terms of ethnicity and religion.⁴¹

The adaptability of imposed identities is discussed further by Donald Sutton and Kang Xiaofei, who examine the complex convergence of ethnicity, religion and tourism in Huanglong, a site bordering Tibet in the far southwest of China. This region has long been shared by a diverse population of Han, Tibetans, Hui and Qiang, among others, each marking out its own landscape of sacred sites. As late as the mid-twentieth century, these visions had coexisted largely by bypassing and ignoring each other—Tibetans worshipped in the mountains, Han in the lowlands and Muslims within their own communities. However, with the formation of minority policy and extension of local and central state power under the People’s Republic, and the more recent development of the area as a tourist destination, local ethnic and religious identities have been forced to accommodate various levels of external definition. These new realities bring different issues to bear on each community. Remembering especially the persecutions and physical destruction of the 1960s, Han faithful stubbornly refuse to accommodate the sanitized religious sites, practices and histories established by local tourism officials. Tibetans find their religious practices and identities merged into a visible and highly commoditized religio-ethnicity that is consumed increasingly by newly wealthy Han Chinese tourists. In contrast, Muslim Hui are largely excluded both from the tourism boom and from the evolving “ethnic”

history of the region, and thus produce their own interpretations often based, not surprisingly, around the mosque.

Commerce—New religions and new media

In a similar manner, the ever-expanding reach of commercial networks and structures into new social realms shapes religion, but this influence is felt in many different ways. At the most basic level, the expansion of trade networks can facilitate religious mission by opening new routes of communication and transportation, and often by providing economic incentives for conversion. Trade carried all sorts of religious mission to and within Asia—Buddhism along the Silk Road, Iberian Catholicism to China, Islam throughout much of the Malay world and various denominations of Christianity to the entire region in the mission boom of the nineteenth century. Beyond simply facilitating communication, the constant refinement of the technologies of commerce also shapes the way that ideas are spread. Just as the promise of distant markets had once brought the ships that carried the missionaries, the rise of a consumer class also set the stage for the mass marketing of goods and ideas. The same Victorian housewife that might have purchased the cloth and domestic goods of the Industrial Revolution, also bought newspapers, attended exhibitions and fairs, and was probably a member of a few civic organizations, as well. With these new forms of communication and organization, one can no longer speak of a simple “marketplace of ideas,” as much as a mass market, with producers, consumers and distribution networks.

New forms of media and distribution create opportunities, and shape both ideas themselves and how the individual engages those ideas. One only needs to look at the intensely emotional debates that have arisen among academics over the use of the Internet in the classroom, complete with apocalyptic predictions that electronic media will doom a generation of students to mental atrophy, to appreciate what is at stake. Looking back further in time, similar predictions were made at the advent of television and radio, and the removal of Latin from school curricula, the common argument essentially being the essence of mass marketing—that an abundance of supply creates a compliant consumer, in this case a passive and disengaged student. However, although innovations in media did allow the producers of information increasingly broad and direct access to individual consumers, these advances did not necessarily make readers passive, as much as they reconfigured communities of interpretation. Few could argue that changes such as the use of vernacular in commercial printing deadened intellectual exchange. Indeed, the new accessibility of information produced an explosion of ideas for the simple reason that even if people might consume information as individuals, they still interpret its content in groups. In a similar manner, the opportunities afforded by new media such as the Internet are remarkable precisely because they allow direct participation by users within virtual communities.

In this volume, two chapters examine the interaction of religion and mass communications from opposite angles—the power of mass media to shape images of religion, and the ability of religious groups to exploit the opportunities that new media present, respectively. My own chapter addresses the first of these by tracing the portrayal of religion in one particularly interesting publication—a Chinese-language newspaper produced under Japanese ownership in Manchuria both before and after the region fell under Japanese colonial control in 1932. Over the course of four decades, the portrayal of religion in this publication served different didactic ends, first the antisuperstition biases of the Chinese elite, and later the social engineering programs of the Japanese empire. Nevertheless, the newspaper remained a commercial entity, and whatever its social mission, still had to turn a profit. In between these two ideological extremes, the newspaper behaved more obviously as commercial product, dropping the pedantic tone of social reform through religion to focus on the type of salacious images of saints and sinners that would expand the readership.

In her chapter, Nancy Stalker demonstrates how emerging forms of mass media were effectively adopted by one religious organization in early-twentieth-century Japan. Using a supply-side explanation of religious development, Stalker argues that new, visual forms of commercial entertainment, including exhibitions and films, presented new opportunities for marketing religion to urban and rural audiences. As a result of what she terms “charismatic entrepreneurship,” Ōmoto, a Shintoist new religion, experienced a rapid expansion, and would eventually merge with similar movements brewing on the Asian mainland.

Beyond questions of supply, such as competition among providers of religious goods and services, the religious economy model also can account for a degree of elasticity in the market for, and thus definition of religion. While religions such as Ōmoto clearly bettered the monastic Buddhist establishment in marketing a new and exciting image, doing so did not necessarily draw off support from them. Emerging technologies of commerce opened up new markets for mass communication, for example, among new sectors of the urban public and in previously inaccessible rural villages, and in doing so also developed new religious idioms. Thus, recent developments like American televangelism may have been inspired by an earlier tradition of tent revivals, but the form of religious engagement that they represent are unique to the popularization of mass communication in the late twentieth century.⁴² The commercial drive itself does not simply allow religion to reach new markets, it also expands the type of services available, a process seen when the introduction of an American-style funeral industry to Japan added new products, services and ritual obligations to that most important of ritual occasions.⁴³ Like any form of mass consumption, changes driven by the marketing of religion brought religious ideas and concerns into new homes, but more fundamentally into new areas of life and personal experience.

Conclusion

Examining the big changes to religion over these two centuries and in such a geographically large and politically diverse region reveals two main points. First, the changes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries might have been initiated by the powerful, but were never completely directed by them. What might have appeared to be the domination of discourse, or the political or economic realms, was never absolute, and was always fleeting. The longer lasting, more deeply pervasive influence of Western or Japanese imperialism, the transformation of precolonial states, or of the rise of various regimes in the postcolonial period, were the techniques that they introduced. New ways of communicating knowledge, seeking religious converts, ruling diverse populations and engaging in trade were beyond the ability of any one party to monopolize, and the ideas that these new practices implied transformed the entire region, former friends and foes alike.

Second, all of these transformations were deeply interconnected, and change to any one area could have diverse and often unexpected repercussions for others, including the idea and practice of religion. This theme of “unintended consequences” is frequently raised in the history of technology (often in reference to things like the overuse of antibiotics creating super-strong pathogens, or the ecological damage wrought by the introduction of new plant and animal species, such as kudzu or Africanized bees), but it applies equally well to the type of questions we deal with here.⁴⁴ Consider the complex chain of events that led up to an event that many readers will have experienced personally, the creation of Cambodia’s Angkor Wat as a site of religious tourism. The ruins of Angkor were already known to Europeans, specifically to French explorers seeking a riverine trade route into China through the Mekong, the site was popularized by Henri Mouhot (1826–1861), a young philologist who had himself been sent in 1856 by the British Royal Geographical Society to collect zoological specimens. Mouhot’s writings on the site compared Angkor to the wonders of the ancient world, and sold widely in a variety of languages to a European audience, newly infected with the vogue for all things Oriental (Indian and Egyptian, specifically), and increasingly able to purchase inexpensive print publications.⁴⁵ After another century of neglect, a project initiated in the 1980s by a variety of political interests, such as the Cambodian government and United Nations, as well as of world heritage NGOs, particularly those hailing from Japan, restored many of the ruins to the state tourists see them in today. Of the million or so foreigners that visit the site each year, no small number are Western fans of Buddhism, an interest that has been fed by popular authors like D. T. Suzuki, and the overseas operations of Buddhist missionary organizations, such as Soka Gakkai. This single story, like many of those in this volume, only makes sense as the confluence of numerous factors—economic, political, social and spiritual. It is this complexity that binds the history of religion within the region together, and to the global changes of two centuries.

Notes

1. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), xi. The classic and most influential work on this topic remains Wilfred Cantwell Smith's *The Meaning and End of Religion* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1991), followed by the work of Talal Asad, in particular, "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category," in Talal Asad, ed., *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1993), 27–54; Talal Asad, "Religion, Nation-state, Secularism," in *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia*, Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehman, eds (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 178–196.
2. For example, the 1998 Lambeth Conference decided that homosexuality for priests was "incompatible with scripture." Windsor Report, Appendix 3: Resolution 1.10 Human Sexuality. <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/windsor2004/appendix/p36.cfm> accessed on May 10, 2006. See also <http://www.womenpriests.org/menu.asp>.
3. This is most closely associated with Martin Heidegger, who distinguished the instrumental definition of technology as a means to an end from its "essence" as a "way of revealing," that is, as a mode of knowledge. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, tr. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977). On the myriad social lives of technology, see Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, tr. Alan Sheridan and John Law (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988). The idea of *practice* as advanced by Pierre Bourdieu is comparable, the essential point being that how things can be and are done has an internal logic. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, tr. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Polity, 1989).
4. Among many others, these would include the extended maritime trade routes between China, Japan and insular Southeast Asia. See Anthony Reid, *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000) and the work of Geoff Wade, particularly his recent "Ming China and Southeast Asia in the 15th Century: A Reappraisal," available as an electronic resource at <http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/pub/wps2004/abs028.htm>.
5. These claims aside, and despite its infatuation with all things Western, the avowed goal of the Meiji period was not at all to become European, but rather to become "modern," in particular, in a way that would retain a Japanese spirit. See especially Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).
6. Ussama Makdisi, "Reclaiming the Land of the Bible: Missionaries, Secularism and Evangelical Modernity," *American Historical Review* 102, 3 (June 1997), 680–713.
7. Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 72–104, quoted from p. 86.
8. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 60, 67; N. J. Girardot, "Max Müller's *Sacred Books* and the Nineteenth-Century Production of the Comparative Science of Religions," *History of Religions* 41, 3 (2002), 213–250; Donald S. Lopez Jr., ed., *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
9. Brian K. Pennington ably summarizes this view and addresses many of its claims in *Was Hinduism Invented?: Britons, Indians, and the Colonial Construction of Religion* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 167–189.

10. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, tr. Ephraim Fischhoff (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), 809–815.
11. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds, *Becoming National: A Reader* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 52; in the attempt to replace religious symbolism with national, see Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, tr. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988). For a convincing refutation of the idea that the state simply replaced religion, see Gauri Viswanathan, “Religious Conversion and the Politics of Dissent,” in Peter van der Veer, ed., *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 89–114.
12. This topic was discussed at the Casting Faiths workshop in a paper by Webb Keane, which has since appeared as the third chapter of his *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter* (*The Anthropology of Christianity*) (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), also Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001).
13. Anthony C. Yu, *State and Religion in China: Historical and Textual Perspectives* (Chicago and LaSalle: Open Court Press, 2005).
14. Brian K. Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented?*, 23–57.
15. The term derives from the “religious economy” school of sociology. See, for example, Roger Finke and Laurence R. Iannaccone, “Supply-Side Explanations for Religious Change” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 527, Religion in the Nineties (1993), 27–39. For a recent application of religious economy to an Asian context, see Fenggang Yang, “The Red, Black, and Gray Markets of Religion in China,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 47 (2006), 93–122.
16. Peter van Rooden, “Nineteenth Century Representations of Missionary Conversion and the Transformation of Western Christianity,” in Peter van der Veer, ed., *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 65–88, quoted from p. 84.
17. Edward Said, for example, does not address the reaction of Arab readers to the Orientalist discourse he so famously outlines, and is somewhat equivocal on the real significance of the “positional superiority” (p. 22) of the West in the process.
18. Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters*.
19. David Forgacs, ed., *An Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916–1935* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1999), 190–200.
20. Rebecca E. Karl, “Creating Asia: China in the World at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century,” *American Historical Review* 103, 4 (October 1998).
21. *The First Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Conference, 26 December 1957 to January 1, 1958*, 2nd edn (Cairo: The Permanent Secretariat of the Organization for Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity, 1958), 12.
22. This essay also refers to the “technicalization” of society, which he defines as an emphasis on the refinement of technique which leads to the “expectation of continuous innovation.” Marshall E. G. Hodgson, *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam and World History*, ed. Edmund Burke III (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 44–71, quoted from p. 63.
23. On the role of western colonial theory and experience in the formation of the Japanese empire, see Mark R. Peattie, “Japanese Attitudes Towards Colonialism, 1895–1945,” in Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, eds, *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 80–127.

24. Peter van Rooden, "Nineteenth Century Representations of Missionary Conversion and the Transformation of Western Christianity," in Peter van der Veer, ed., *Conversion to Modernities*, 65–87.
25. See, for example, S. N. Balagangadhara, quoted in Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented?*, 175, and Gu Zhanbo in Yu, *State and Religion in China*, 5.
26. Dan Fenno Henderson, "Japanese Influences on Communist Legal Language," in Jerome Alan Cohen, ed., *Contemporary Chinese Law: Research Problems and Perspectives* (Harvard, 1970), 158–187. Soejima Shōichi, "Manshūkoku' tōchi to chigai hōkan teppai" [Manchukuo governance and the abolition of extraterritoriality], in Yamamoto Yūzo, ed. *Manshūkoku no kenkyū* [Research on Manchukuo] (Tokyo: Ryokuin, 1995), 131–155. Despite its earlier genealogy, the term was resurrected specifically to approximate the German *Religionsübung*. Yu, *State and Religion in China*, 5–25.
27. Donald S. Lopez, ed., *Curators of the Buddha*.
28. In one telling example, Japanese Christian missionaries established 877 Sunday schools in prewar Manchuria, but three sects of Buddhism combined to build 1304. Shimada Michiya, *Manshu kyōikushi* [History of education in Manchuria] (Dairen: Testudo shuppan, 1935), 544–545. As of 2004, South Korea had 12,000 Christian missionaries in the field, second only to the United States. *New York Times*, 2004. Korean Missionaries Carrying Word to Hard-to-Sway Places, November 1.
29. van Rooden, "Nineteenth Century Representations of Missionary Conversion and the Transformation of Western Christianity," in Peter van der Veer, ed., *Conversion to Modernities*, 84.
30. Peter Hansen discusses this in Vietnam. For an earlier Chinese example, see Charles A. Litzinger, "Temple Community and Village Cultural Integration in North China: Evidence from 'Sectarian Cases' (*Chiao-an*) in Chih-li, 1860–1895." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Davis, 1983.
31. Chien Hong-Mo, "The Conversion Experience of Taiwan's Indigenous People: The Case of Meihsi Village, Jen'Ai District, Nantou County," in Elise Anne DeVido and Benoît Vermander, eds, *Creeds, Rites and Videotapes: Narrating Religious Experience in East Asia* (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute, 2004), 151–186; Paul R. Katz, *When Valleys Turned Blood Red: The Ta-pa-ni Incident in Colonial Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 138.
32. Jean and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, Vol. 1: *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
33. See, for example, Lian Xi, *The Conversion of Missionaries: Liberalism in American Protestant Missions in China, 1907–1932* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).
34. Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented?*, 93–100; Webb Keane also discusses the desire to strip native religion from its material base, although this is in the context of casting the latter as an acceptable, yet equally expendable form of culture.
35. Changing attitudes among Christian missionaries are best expressed in the formation of the Dutch "Ethical Policy," as discussed by Tjoa-Bonatz and Connolly in this volume. Carolyn Brewer, *Holy Confrontation: Religion, Gender, and Sexuality in the Philippines, 1521–1685* (Manila: C. Brewer and the Institute of Women's Studies, St. Scholastica's College, 2001), 312–313.
36. See the three articles in the Symposium on Studying Catholicism in Vietnam through Missionary Sources, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 35, 2 (2004).

37. J. Duncan M. Derrett, *Religion, Law and the State in India* (Delhi, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) (originally published 1968). Part of the inspiration for this enforcement of difference was the desire of the vocal “unofficial” European population of India to remain outside the jurisdiction of native courts. Elizabeth Kolsky, “Codification and the Rule of Colonial Difference: Criminal Procedure in British India,” *Law and History Review* 3, 23, (2005), 631–684.
38. C. Fasseur, “Colonial Dilemma: Von Vollenhoven and the Struggle Between Adat Law and Western Law in Indonesia” in W. J. Mommsen and J. A. de Moor, eds, *European Expansion and Law: The Encounter of European and Indigenous Law in 19th- and 20th-Century Africa and Asia* (Oxford and New York: Berg Publishers, 1992), 237–256.
39. Dagmar Engels, “Wives Widows and Workers: Women and the Law in Colonial India” in Mommsen and de Moor, eds, *European Expansion and Law: The Encounter of European and Indigenous Law in 19th- and 20th-Century Africa and Asia* (Oxford and New York: Berg Publishers, 1992), 159–178.
40. Jothie Rajah, “Negotiating Legal Identities: Hindu Law in Singapore” unpublished paper, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore.
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Part I

Orientalism and the Western Recasting of Buddhism

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2

From *Thathanadaw* to Theravāda Buddhism: Constructions of Religion and Religious Identity in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Myanmar

Alexey Kirichenko

The profound transformation of Buddhism that occurred in Myanmar (Burma) during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries manifested itself in various ways.¹ One of them was conceptual, including the creation of new overarching terms “Buddhism” (*botdabada*) and “religion” (*bada*) and the redefinition of Buddhist identity. Rather than the single-horizontal identity connoted by the modern term “Buddhism,” precolonial Burmese usage signified status differentiation, hierarchical arrangements and specific roles for *saṃgha* and laity.² In addition, while precolonial concepts emphasized a discrete set of observances, the term “Buddhism,” adopted into modern Burmese, implies the primacy of a uniform set of doctrines.

The change reflected in the introduction of new terms and concepts was not merely linguistic. Casting the doctrines and practices derived from the word of the Buddha as Buddhism and the latter as religion allowed local actors not only to put the Burmese faithful on an equal basis with the adherents of other religions but also to demonstrate the superiority of their creed using the Western epistemological framework. At the same time, by reducing the gap between *saṃgha* and laity, as well as gradations within each group, the new terms provided a new vision of a common Buddhist identity.³ The nascent Burmese nationalism could employ this newly cast identity for popular mobilization and thus gain a voice in the political sphere as well. Thus, though these new terms and notions came into local usage only after the rapid expansion of contact with the outside world, particularly the expansion of British colonization during the nineteenth century, the discourse of how Burmese “Buddhism” fits into the phenomenon of world “religion” was not the exclusive epistemological enterprise of colonial outsiders.

This chapter will compare the precolonial and subsequent usage of terms denoting Buddhism or equated with it in the secondary literature. Beyond the terms themselves, I will also discuss how they were introduced and by whom, and how they were accepted into the Burmese language. The chapter thus would offer a case study of a process of indigenization of the category of “religion,” a process more or less common to all South, Southeast, and East-Asian countries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A religion or not? A debate on precolonial Theravāda Buddhist identity

There is a debate in Theravāda studies on precolonial equivalents of “religion” and “Buddhism” and on the identity of Theravādins. While some scholars argue that these terms appeared in the leading Theravādin countries like Sri Lanka only during the colonial period, others are inclined to see precolonial analogs for them. According to the first school of thought, the indigenous Sinhalese terms now used to represent “religion” and “Buddhism” originally had very precise and particularistic meanings. Such were *bauddha-samaya* (Sinh.) denoting “Buddhist thought” and probably “the Buddhist community,” *sāsana* (“instruction, admonition of the Buddha”), and *āgama* (“that which has come down to the present,” “authoritative text”). Either in the later part of the eighteenth century or in the early part of the nineteenth, the latter term underwent a change in meaning to become an equivalent of “religion” with its derivative *buddhāgama* representing “Buddhism.” According to John Ross Carter, this change was effected either by Westerners, perhaps by Christian missionaries, or represented indigenous attempt to match newly introduced concepts.⁴

A similar argument was advanced by Gustaaf Houtman as regards Myanmar.⁵ Houtman claimed that for centuries Burmese had used two words in reference to the Buddha’s teachings—*dhamma* (Bur. *dama*, “the Law”) and *sāsana* (Bur. *thathana*). Another term, *botdabada* (*bok-da’ba-tha* in Houtman’s transcription) meaning Buddhism as a religion, was introduced in the nineteenth century but came into wide use only in the twentieth century. A number of Houtman’s sources and informants attributed the coining of this new term to Adoniram Judson (1788–1850), one of the first American Baptist missionaries to Burma.⁶

Another approach, most notably voiced by Kitsiri Malalgoda, proceeds from the idea that postcolonial conceptualization of “religion” is an overly narrow and intellectualist one. Though Malalgoda agrees that *āgama* (as “religion”) and *buddhāgama* were indeed introduced to Sri Lanka by Christian missionaries, he claims that the earlier terms *sāsana* and *dhamma* were serviceable for the description of sets of practices and beliefs common to the Sinhalese and as such could have stood as equivalents for “Buddhism.”⁷ This view is shared by other scholars of Sri Lankan history and religion such as Gananath Obeyesekere and Michael Roberts who argue that the concept of *sāsana* together with other factors was instrumental for the development of common identity

among the Sinhalese in precolonial times, especially during the Kandyan period (late sixteenth century–1815).⁸ Obeyesekere broadens the translation of *sāsana* as “Buddhist church” with a double meaning of universal Buddhist community transcending ethnic and other boundaries and a church particularized in some physical bounds (which he calls “the Buddhism of... [a given] nation” and even “a form of nationhood”).⁹

These two approaches entail a completely different understanding of precolonial self-consciousness of Theravādins. If the latter school posits a well developed and inclusive community based on common axiomatic identity as Obeyesekere calls it, the former removes the key concepts of “Buddhism” and “religion” on which such identity could have been built. Instead, it argues, these concepts would be constructed only in the nineteenth century and then made a “deployable ideological entity,” a “terrain on which Sinhalas reconstituted themselves as members of one ‘religious’ community against rival ones.”¹⁰

As this ongoing debate demonstrates, analysis of the terms themselves can only take us so far. The crux of the question is whether the introduction of new terminology reflected meaningful changes in ideas and practices of the so-called Buddhists, whether it really made any difference that people came to identify themselves as Buddhists instead of “those who are within the fold of *sāsana*.” The answer then lies in the use of these terms, how and by whom they were used, and what kind of religious or social changes underlay the switch in terminology.

The difference between *thathanadaw* and Buddhism

Since the nineteenth century, Western writing employed a number of terms to describe the Burmese religious system. These were “Buddhism” itself, “Southern Buddhism” or “Hīnayāna,” “Theravāda,” and finally “Burmese Buddhism.” Some earlier elements traced with the help of archaeology were returned as “Mahāyāna” and “Tantrism.” Though some of these terms may well seem indigenous, in fact all they were inscribed into the local usage by the dominating Western discourse.¹¹ Thus, despite the basic difference in their meaning and origin, in Myanmar these terms became as congenerical as in the West where they were seen as various forms of Buddhism.

Sāsana (or *thathana* as it was called in Burmese), the term sometimes uncritically equated with Buddhism, belongs to a completely different precolonial indigenous discourse. The principal difference between these discourses is that while the Western discourse implied a self-identical, objective system based on doctrine as well as common horizontal identity for the faithful, the indigenous discourse represented a much more complex reality where religious and social identities were inseparable and so religious participation was mediated by one’s social status.¹² It produced a system with hierarchical, not horizontal identities, system based on practice rather than on doctrine and having no existence

apart from its practitioners. This becomes evident if we explore this system in the context of its social setting.

The system of *thathanadaw* resembled a constellation of hierarchies and semi-autonomous communities differing in pursuits and standing.¹³ Here such factors as status, descent and ethnicity came to forefront, creating tangible division lines and hence discrete identities. This was reflected in the indigenous lexicon, which tended to connote the hierarchic arrangement and status differentiation rather than any community of correlative religionists. It distinguished ordinary laypersons, laypersons observing certain vows, recluses, novices and monks with nothing roughly analogous to term “Buddhist” which could bridge the difference between these vocations.

The most important division was that between the monks and the laity. Rather confusingly it is often downplayed by the available scholarship. Structural descriptions of Theravāda Buddhism as a religious system recognize the existence of inequality and differentiation based on sex (male/female), vocation (monks/laity) and objectives (transmission of teaching/meditation to achieve liberation/merit-making). They state that primary concern for monks was the practice and preservation of the teaching and acting as a “field of merit” while for laity it was merit-making itself.¹⁴ Yet, they usually blur that distinction stressing the interdependence of roles and similarity of pursuits of both the sides. Such approach is especially typical for scholarship on the social workings of Buddhism in Southeast Asia.¹⁵ There, as Robert Lester has argued, “the layman must be considered as much as a Buddhist as the monk. Further, . . . the line between monk and layman is not a hard one—the male member of the society may move between the status and role of monk and of layman with relative ease.”¹⁶

However, while such a portrayal may be correct at present, the opposite was true in Myanmar of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. In contrast to modern Southeast Asia, in precolonial Myanmar status differentiation of monks and laity could not be easily transcended and implied markedly different practices and disparate realizations. Certainly, there are canonical texts that argue the compatibility of the way of the monk and the way of the householder, showing that both actors can realize *nibbāna*, that ordination is open to all, and that *sāsana* is the same for all.¹⁷ In practice, however, these suppositions were not held true.

First of all, in the eighteenth century a significant part of Burman *saṃgha* and laity were convinced that since 2000 years had elapsed since the *parinibbāna* of the Buddha the realization of *nibbāna* became almost impossible. According to commentarial tradition, the attainment of *arahant*-ship, the final stage of purification, leading to the release from *saṃsāra* was completely unachievable because of the gradual disappearance of the “true law” (*saddhamma*).¹⁸ Some prominent Burman observers believed that experiencing *nibbāna* at the lower stages of purification also did not happen as those now living lacked necessary moral perfections.¹⁹ The claims to attainment of such realizations were

made only by the leaders of certain marginal movements and communities. The practice of meditation in general was relegated to numerically small and often structurally marginalized category of the so-called forest monks (Bur. *taw-nei*, Pāli *araññavāsī*). At the same time, other fringe groups were convinced that real *saṃgha* or even *thathana* in general had already disappeared.²⁰

In such a context, the canonical goal of practicing the *dhamma* to achieve the immediate release from *saṃsāra* becomes irrelevant. Rather, the focus changes to accumulating merit, as a way to relieve suffering, avoid unfavorable births, and ensure further *kammatic* progress in the long term. In fact, such focus is shared by both the monks and the laity thus eliminating the difference of their vocations argued by the scholarship. Yet, a new divergence occurs: in order that merit could be accumulated as long as possible it is critically important to maintain the conditions necessary for it. This was to be achieved by preservation of the teaching (both as scriptures and as a living tradition of scriptural studies), supporting the monastic community (as it was monks who transmitted the scriptures and acted as a source of merit—gained by making donations and seeking them out for instruction), construction of stupas (so that merit could be gained by venerating them), and practicing the moral observances taught by the Buddha. The role of monks in these activities was clearly more important than that of the laity. They acted as custodians of the teaching (hence the specific Burman term for monks—“those responsible for *thathana*” or “ones in charge of *thathana*,” *thathana-wun-dan*) and instructors of the laity while the latter mainly supported them.

The special position of monkhood was confirmed through the concept of three aspects of the “true law”—*pariyatti* (transmission and study of the teaching), *paṭipāṭti* (practice of the teaching), and *paṭivedha* (personal realization of the path).²¹ While *paṭivedha* was seemingly irrelevant due to absence of *ariyas*, “noble ones” who had achieved purification, the other two aspects were almost exclusively associated with monks. It was monks who studied the texts and commented on them thus appropriating *pariyatti*.²² While *paṭipāṭti* is now interpreted predominantly as the practice of meditation that is open for all, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was limited to the observance of discipline by monks and novices and performance of monastic rituals.²³

Finally, the special position of monkhood was also reinforced by the fact that ordination was not open to everyone—royal orders excluded members of low status and crown service groups.²⁴ While no data exists on availability of temporary ordination, short-term excursions into the *saṃgha* obviously did not confer prestige comparable to that of a career monk. No doubt based on all these differences, some Burman documents even referred to the “*thathana* of monks” (*yahan-thathana*) as distinct from the “*thathana* of laity” (*lu-thathana*) thus making *thathana* a kind of dual system.²⁵

Beyond this simple bifurcation between monastics and laity, the different scope of contributions to preservation and support of the teaching produced hierarchies within each group, with royal teachers and the king himself at their

respective apices. To preserve the *thathana*, *saṃgha* and royalty combined their efforts shaping the system of court monasticism which by the late eighteenth century functioned as an elite establishment numbering about 3000 people.²⁶ Its primary tasks were the transmission of scriptural learning with special emphasis on Pāli grammar as a prerequisite of correct understanding, the training of new generations of monks to reproduce *saṃgha* physically, maintenance of libraries, supervision over the copying of manuscripts, officiating at the ceremonies and provision of expertise necessary to lay supporters of *thathana*.

The special position of the king and his court among the laity was safeguarded by sumptuary rights regulating the design of monasteries and decoration of manuscripts permitted to members of different social groups and attempts to dictate the use of only royally approved copies of religious manuscripts for recopying. Royalty-centered nature of the system of *thathanadaw* is also perfectly illustrated by the notion of *thathana*'s reposition. As follows from a number of documents, *thathana* "existed" (*ti*, literally "stood fast" or "reposed") thanks to its being "perpetuated" (*hsaung*) by monks (in effect, the elite establishment) and "relying" (*ahmi-pyu*) on the king. Senior monks were said to be "propagators" and "curators" of *thathana* (*thathana-pyu*, *thathana-saung*) while the king was its "donor" (*thathana-dayaka*) meaning that he supported the *saṃgha* and donated his power to its leaders to enforce their decisions.²⁷

The notion of *thathana*'s reposition, similar to Sinhalese concept that Lanka is "the Island of the Law" (*dhammadīpa*), implied that Burman kings had succeeded the ancient kings of Majjhimadesa (India) in the capacity of custodians of the teaching.²⁸ Their realm was often defined in court documents as "the place where Sāsana is reposed" (*thathanadaw-ti-ya*) while court chronicles and poems narrated how this status was envisaged by the Buddha himself.²⁹

More precisely, *thathanadaw-ti-ya* was more often identified not with the realm itself (*ne*, *taingpyi*) but with its sacred centre, the royal city (*pyi*), further highlighting the connection between the teaching and royal/monastic establishment. By at least the seventeenth century, an elaborate theory had developed outlining the succession of royal cities which would preserve *thathana* for all the 5000 years of its existence. In its most comprehensive form, the list consisted of 15 cities, of which only the first (Sri Lanka, which had been transformed from island to city) was located outside Myanmar.³⁰ Though not universally accepted, this concept played an important role for choosing the locations of capitals and transferring the seats of sovereign power before the annexation of Upper Myanmar in 1886.³¹

Yet, another division within the segmented and hierarchical arrangement of the monkhood was based on ethnicity. Documents from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries recognize the division into Burmese, Mon, Shan, Indian, Manipuri, Northern Thai, Central Thai, Tavoyan and Taninthayi *saṃghas*. It seems that even existing within the same royal city, these communities did not mix and quite often competed with each other. They performed ordinations and other ecclesiastical acts separately, and there is evidence of them performing the rituals for laity separately as well.³² While these groups did interact to a

certain degree, they definitely did not function as a single-monastic system. The Burman *saṃgha* enjoyed privileged position among them and almost all appointments to monastic hierarchy developed by the crown came from its ranks. The Burman monastic establishment guarded its privileges fervently opposing any appointments from other groups.³³ Monks from other ethnic groups were also subject to closer scrutiny by secular authorities and their position was more precarious.³⁴

The Burman *saṃgha* was further segmented into royalty-centered elite monastic networks, monastic communities supported by local elites and the parochial monasticism of non-elite strata. The first segment provided career custodians of the teaching and ritual specialists for the court and its agents throughout the realm. It functioned as a semi-closed system encompassing core areas of the upper country; available biographical data on prominent Burmese monks show that from mid-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries the court system of monastic recruitment hardly reached out even to areas around Pye and Taungngu let alone to the more distant Lower Myanmar or Shan States.

The second segment performed similar functions for elites of secondary centers throughout the realm. It often differed from elite monastic networks in interpretation of scriptures and ritual observances. At the same time, it functioned as a pool of candidates for upward mobility and inclusion into the court system, paralleling the rise of local elites to prominence or establishment of close relations between them and the court. The third segment was comprised mainly of incumbents of communal village monasteries but essentially it represented all monastics that ministered to ritual and educational needs of the non-elite population. While few monks of this type made it into the historical record, it seems that they had neither supralocal organization nor significant mobility. Until the late eighteenth century, when the reforms of king Badonmin (1781–1819) subjected these discrete lineages to closer supervision from the capital, and opened new channels for vertical and horizontal mobility, the local *saṃgha* functioned almost completely independent of the monastic establishment supported by the court.

Contributing to this segmented and hierarchical arrangement was also the fact that *thathanadaw* and belonging to it was understood as a number of observances and realizations, not as a set of doctrines and beliefs. A comparison of any contemporary work meant to serve as an introduction to Buddhism for beginners with texts used for such introduction historically would reveal that difference. While the former mainly discuss Buddhism as a set of propositions about reality, the latter present precepts, observances and passages for recital. Further, precolonial texts defining model followers of the teaching generally spoke of things to do, not of postulates to believe in or hold as a view.³⁵

Vocational differentiation described above was reflected in observances required of various status groups. As a result, at least theoretically the religious system of *thathanadaw* was manned by people graded on the basis of number of precepts they observed. Beginning with refuge in the Three Gems

(Buddha, *dhamma* and *samgha*), laity, novices and monks each had different sets of precepts. Even the refuge in the Three Gems (*saraṇa*), a basic observance now usually considered common to all Buddhists, was gradated by both commentarial tradition and Burman interpretation.³⁶

On a practical level, the segmented nature of monastics and laity thwarted the development of fixed and widely recognized requirements and definitions for each type of practitioners and fueled the resistance to any attempts to impose them if such were made. For instance, despite rather clear scriptural definitions of ordination procedure and requirements of cloistered life, recognition of formal qualifications for monkhood was not universal until, at least, early twentieth century. Reform-minded elders of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who insisted on strict adherence to Vinaya (canonic disciplinary rules) took great pains to convince the public that monks who had not passed valid ordination or were simply non-ordained were “false monks” (*shin-yaung*) although it remains to be determined to which extent their efforts were successful.

Moreover, the meaning of being a lay devotee or a monk, to give the easiest example, was gradually redefined throughout the period in question turning these identities into actively contested ones. In the case of monks, the historical trend generally was toward the subjection to stricter observance of discipline, reorientation toward practicing the teaching in addition to its preservation (such as the revival of meditation traditions) and changes in patterns of recruitment and organization. In the case of laity, we may first see the promotion of uncorrupted observance of the refuge in the Three Gems and maintenance of basic precepts followed by gradual initiation into more sophisticated forms of practice, including access to those domains previously reserved almost exclusively for monks.³⁷

I would argue that the status inequality of actors in the system of *thathanadaw* was more overt, functional and detrimental to the development of common identity than in other world religions because the difference of roles assigned to these actors was exacerbated by the absence of notion of encompassing community. That, for example, contrasted the system of *thathanadaw* with the medieval Roman Catholic Church, that maintained the notion of existence of separate social orders (first the tenth-century classification of *oratores*, *bellatores*, and *laboratores*, later the twelfth-century classification of the clergy (*ordo clericalis*) and the laity (*ordo laicalis*)) operating on entirely different levels, but totalized these orders in the community of Christian church. In precolonial Burmese the term *thathanadaw* was literally translated as “instruction” (*ahson-ama*) and understood as a space established by the Buddha which one could enter to achieve complete liberation from existence or a better birth. Thus, *thathana* by itself obviously was not a “community,” “church” or “a form of nationhood” as Obeyesekere claims for Sinhalese *sāsana*, but a medium of improvement of one’s status in the *saṃsāra*.

It remains to be explored if the status inequality and separate identities for ordinary laypersons, laypersons observing certain vows, recluses, novices and

monks suggested by indigenous lexicon was mitigated by more general notions roughly corresponding to the Christian terms of “believers” and “non-believers.” Analogues of the former—“those who speak properly” or “those who speak in accordance with the Law” (Bur. *damawadi*, Pāli *dharmavadi*) and “right views” (Bur. *thamadeikhti*, Pāli *sammādiṭṭhi*) denoting a true follower of the teaching—were used less frequently than the more specific terms denoting vocation and even more rarely used as a form of self-reference. If a common identity did exist, it was one promoted rather by the negative image of outsiders. These others were said to have “wrong views” (Bur. *meikhsa* or *meikhsadeikhti*, Pāli *macchādiṭṭhi*), to “adhere to another creed” (Bur. *teikhti*, Pāli *tiṭṭhiya*), “speak improperly” (Bur. *adamawadi*, Pāli *adhamavadi*), and fall “outside of *thathana*” (Bur. *thathana-apa*). Such designations were not only “religious”—they were as often applied to members of other ethnic groups, both indigenous and foreign.³⁸

Right vs wrong views—the Burman science of comparative religion

Another key difference between the Western discourse of Buddhism and the precolonial discourse of *thathana* is that Buddhism was understood as a religion based on a set of propositions about reality which could be juxtaposed with other religions, while *thathana* or *dhamma* were conceived as *sui generis*. The precolonial Burman culture saw nothing else comparable to the *dhamma* and seemingly was not challenged in that belief as it even did not care to develop a doxographic tradition that would relate *dhamma* to different teachings.

Having no terms applicable to several teachings regardless their trueness, Myanmar was different from some of its Asian neighbors. In China and subsequently in Korea there existed a concept of “three teachings” (Ch. *san jiao*) which related Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. In Indian doxographies teachings were compared as “schools of philosophy” (*darśana*) and such approach was shared by Mahayana Buddhists, Jains and Hindus.³⁹ In Sanskrit, term “*dharma*” was also prefixed with nouns so such expressions as *buddhadharma* (teaching of the Buddha or Buddhism) were possible. In Islamic doxographies term “religion” (*din*) was used in reference not only to Islam, Christianity and Judaism, but to Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Hinduism as well.⁴⁰ The Burman case was different: linguistically it recognized only the binary opposition of right and wrong views, of Law and non-Law (*adhamma*) with all other religions classified as the latter. Accordingly, one could be either within the fold of *thathana* and the Law, or outside of it and thus professing a kind of “view,” “opinion” or “belief” (*ayuwada*). This point becomes clear if we look at two following texts of the nineteenth century.

The first piece is a record of a court decision passed by Yandameit Kyawhtin, a district magistrate, in July 1805. One Nga Sandayaw, a native of Manipur, had complained that an Indian Muslim Nga Bya Hin (? Ibrahim) had assaulted him in the course of a theological disagreement. Nga Sandayaw had maintained that

when the god Thanmaphu (Svayambhu) was about to create the first man he secured the help of three goddesses who created fish, reptiles, prawns, animals, birds, rice, fruits and vegetables so that man and his descendants would not starve. However, the first two figures Thanmaphu made out of mud were not beautiful. Not satisfied with the results, Thanmaphu threw them away and they became a monkey and a frog. The third attempt went smoothly and thus mankind appeared. Consequentially, it was proper for men to subsist on plants, fish and animals, with the exception of monkeys and frogs, who were their progenitors.

Nga Bya Hin agreed that all living beings were created by a god, but Khuda (Urdu and Farsi for God) rather than Thanmaphu and not out of mud. In the course of this discussion, according to Nga Sandayaw, Nga Bya Hin had resorted to violence, a claim denied by Nga Bya Hin himself. Nga Bya Hin further claimed that the *brahman* Baladit was also present during their debate, and had contested both of their positions, saying that Vishnu was the only creator.

Let us now analyze the reaction of the Burman judge, Yandameit Kyawhtin, who faced those whom we would call the exponents of three different creeds, all non-Buddhist. Yandameit Kyawhtin noted that the debate between the parties arose as “they expressed their views (*ayuwada*) based on writings and sayings (*sapei pyawhton*).” He further noted: “Yet, if one decides as regards the views of Manipuris, *kalas* (Indians) and brahmans that conditioned phenomena, mind and matter arise out of ignorance as stated in the authoritative texts, there’s no way they would recant [their] views.” Thus, he ruled to question Baladit about the assault and determine guilt on that basis for “if there is disagreement on opinions it should remain so” (i.e., that it should not be settled by violence).⁴¹

It’s clear that Yandameit Kyawhtin is aware of Manipuri, Muslim and Hindu beliefs but that he regards them as “opinions” or “views” which are equally valid because they are equally wrong, and moreover could seemingly not be corrected. The correct view, which he shares, is expressed in the authoritative texts (*kyangan*), an obvious but implicit reference to Buddhist texts. These authoritative texts are superior to the “writings and sayings,” i.e., the texts of other creeds. So the perspective of a Burman judge of the early nineteenth century is one of a binary opposition between the Law and wrong views, where the latter category encompasses all teachings “outside of *thathana*.”

Our second example is “The Taste of Liberation,” a text compiled in 1872 by U Hpo Hlaing (1829–1883), an interior minister (*atwinwun*) at the courts of Mindonmin (1853–1878) and Thibawmin (1878–1885).⁴² This treatise has a unique feature—it contains a brief survey of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. The discussion is built on the contrast between the liberating teaching of the Law of Conditioned Arising (a central feature of Buddhism), and of teachings based on belief in the Creator God and existence of an eternal soul. The latter are all lumped together as “wrong views,” “opinions” (*ayuwada*) and treated as basically the same with minor variations.⁴³ All of these views are portrayed as

having appeared due to profane observation and reasoning, which in turn are caused by a distortion of right views, or are due to ignorance. The opposition of the right and wrong views is mirrored in the terms “people who venerate the Exalted Buddha” (*myat-swa-hpayā ko-gwe-daw-lu-myo*), i.e., Burmese, and “people who don’t venerate the Exalted Buddha” (another term for them is “people who stay outside of *thathana*”).⁴⁴ Thus, quite close to the end of colonization we still evidence the same binary opposition precluding the identification of *dhamma* as belonging to a class of phenomena known by some common name.

The coming of “Buddhism”

Regardless of how terms such as *thathana* or *dhamma* would be used later, the precolonial language did not provide notions or terms comparable to “Buddhism” or “religion.” These overarching categories were introduced during the colonial period through a number of avenues, including missionary propaganda, and colonial administrative and judicial procedure. However, the new identities that arose at that time led Burmese actors to employ them, as well, especially in the popular mobilization campaigns of religious-activist and nationalist groups.

The European conception of religion as an identifiable and independent social phenomenon was reflected in the creation of new terms in Burmese. Soon after the Westerners began to arrive in large numbers we see the coining of Burman equivalents of “religion,” “Buddhism” and “Buddhist.” “Religion” came as *bada*, from the Pāli *bhāsā*—meaning speech or language. “Buddhism” was thus translated as *botdabada* (literally “the religion of the Buddha”) and “Buddhists” as *botdabada-win* (“followers of religion of the Buddha”) or again *botdabada*.

Once created, these terms quickly spread through the British colonial structure, and thus into daily usage. Evidence suggests that these equivalents derived from the work of Christian missionaries who needed them to translate texts and sermons into the Burmese vernacular. The first use of the term *botdabada* known to me is the Burmese title of *A Dictionary of Boodhism and Burmese Literature* (*Botdabada-i abidan-hnin myanma-kyangan-do-hnaik pa-daw-pinnya-sa*) published by the Reverend J. Wade in 1852.⁴⁵ As in other British colonies, these new words were adopted into censuses and legal codes, and rapidly familiarized the masses with the terms “Buddhist” or “Burman-Buddhist.”⁴⁶ A glimpse at the initial usage is provided by Judson’s *Burmese-English Dictionary* (1852). While this contains no separate entry for *botdabada*, that for *bada* employs the following telling example: “as a Judge or Magistrate asking a witness his religion: ‘What is your religion? Buddhism.’”⁴⁷

Another factor, one which displays parallels with the history of Sri Lanka, was the Buddhist response to Burmese Christian conversion. In Sri Lanka public debates with Christian missionaries from the 1860s through the 1880s had helped to revive the interest in Buddhism among new urban elites and strengthened Buddhist identity of the Sinhalese by confirming the superiority of their creed through contest.⁴⁸ In Myanmar the writings of Burmese Christians

who criticized Buddhism and respondent pamphlets where this criticism was met also galvanized certain segments of population and helped to domesticate new terms.⁴⁹ Pamphlets penned by modern-educated Burmese stressing the advantages of Buddhism were another contribution.⁵⁰

It is difficult to determine the time line and scope by which these new terms were appropriated. Throughout the nineteenth century few Buddhists appear to have consciously used the term *botdabada* in reference to themselves. For example, associations formed toward the end of the century to support Buddhism preferred references to *thathana*, not *botdabada*, for example, “Association for the Benefit of Pariyatti-thathana” of Mandalay established in 1898 and the “Association for Supporting the Thathana” formed in 1897 in Moulmein. Yet, by the early twentieth century, the term *botdabada* appears to have become more natural, at least for some segments of the population.

Thus, on 16 April 1900 the organization titled as the “Society for Promoting Buddhism” in English and *Botdabada-thathana-pyu-athin* in Burmese was formed in Mandalay.⁵¹ The principal figure affiliated with this association was U Kyaw Yan, an employee of the Department of Public Instruction, who also founded other organizations in Mandalay and Myingyan and after leaving the colonial civil service established a Buddhist High School in Mandalay. Besides U Kyaw Yan’s service record, another hint at the Westernized nature of the society is provided by its connection with Mr. Colvin, an Irish ordained into *samgha* as U Dhammaloka, who was important in the multi-religious temperance movements as well as founding Buddhist associations in Japan.

Nevertheless, the Society for Promoting Buddhism was not the decisive influence in making the majority of Burmans to identify themselves as *botdabada*. The term used in the name of association was probably an aberration that did not speak beyond the connections of its leaders. Thus, for example, a later and more influential association where U Kyaw Yan was the president employed the term “*botda-thathana*,” not “*botdabada*” as an equivalent for Buddhism in its name.⁵²

It was another organization which was destined to boost the usage of the term “*botdabada*.” On 26 July 1904 several students of Rangoon College established the Rangoon College Buddhist Association (*Yangon-koleik botdabada-athin*). On 10 May 1906 these students, emulating the Sinhalese example, decided to start a new, more inclusive society—the Young Men’s Buddhist Association, YMBA, (*Kalyana-yuwa-botdabada-athin*).⁵³ This organization was destined to become a fermentation chamber for Burman nationalism. Beginning with the establishment of the first regional office at Nyaunglebin in 1909, YMBA branches quickly spread across the country and then rose to prominence in 1917–1919. At that stage they were renamed as Burmese Buddhist Associations (*botdabada myanma-athin*) which made the term *botdabada* a key identification for those who sided with the organization. The term “Buddhism,” originally introduced as part of a Western intellectual package, and spread by new legal, administrative and missionary technologies, had become inseparable from a burgeoning Burmese nationalism.

Turning to the question what was understood as *boutdabada* in the early twentieth century, one may conclude that the term had the literal meaning of the earlier term *thathana* stripped of all of its precolonial social and practical connotations. It meant a “teaching” or “instruction” of the Buddha. Such meaning is clear from the writings of Ledi Hsayadaw (1846–1923), a famous scholar and meditation teacher who probably was the greatest theoretical influence behind the indigenous recasting of *thathana* during the colonial period. Ledi Hsayadaw understood *botdabada* as “the teaching of the Buddha.” Indeed, every religion for him was just a kind of teaching. This approach is evident in a polemic text titled “The Clarification about the Four Great Teachings” (*Bada-gyi-lei-ba shin-lin-gye*) written around 1918, in which the learned monk stated,

[What is] called a “teaching” (*bada*)? Different sayings (*zaga*), different sermons (*taya*) delivered and taught by special persons whom numerous sentient beings faithfully revere are called “religion.” There are four great religions. [These] four [are] the great teaching of the Buddha, the great teaching of brahmans, the great teaching of Christians, the great teaching of Muhammad, four altogether. [What is] called “the great teaching of the Buddha”? ... Sayings of Shin Gotama, the Noble Buddha, are called “the teaching of the Buddha.”⁵⁴

Explaining *bada* as “sayings” and “sermons” (or laws) Ledi Hsayadaw obviously relied on the meaning of the original Pāli word. At the same time, *bada* in Ledi Hsayadaw’s works also carries the meaning of “religion” and *botdabada* is a “Buddhism” or “religion of the Buddha.” This is clear both because Ledi Hsayadaw extensively used the term *botdabada-win* (“Buddhist”) and as he agreed to consider *botdabada* as belonging to the same category as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. Here lies the main difference between the “teaching”/“instruction” of *thathana* and “teaching”/“instruction” of *bada*—the latter is congeneric to other creeds while the former was not.

Other works by Ledi Hsayadaw show that this monk also radically redefined the notion of *thathanadaw*. In his “Illumination of the Excellency of *Sāsana*” (*Sāsanasampattidīpanī*) written in Pāli for Western readers and translated into Burmese vernacular by *hsayadaw*’s disciple U Maung Gyi (Ledi Pandita) in 1915, Ledi Hsayadaw explains that *thathanadaw* which possesses true Buddha, true Dhamma and true Saṃgha is indeed a true *thathana* and Buddhism (*botdabada-thathana* in Maung Gyi’s translation) has all of them.⁵⁵ If we render this statement into more familiar terms it would read just that Buddhism is the true religion which, in its turn, may imply that Christianity, Islam and Hinduism are not. In this narrative the term *thathana* clearly functions not as precolonial *thathanadaw*, but as a modern religion that in the missionary debates of the nineteenth—early twentieth centuries could be declared either true or false.

The analyzed works present a staunch Burman Buddhist recasting his creed as something comparable to other religions. It signifies the appropriation of

initially foreign terminology used here to prove the comparative superiority of Buddha's teaching. In this regard Ledi Hsayadaw accomplished for Myanmar the task analogous to the efforts of Japanese, Ceylonese and Siamese representatives to the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893 who tried to reaffirm the Buddhism as a religion in no way inferior to other world religions.

In precolonial Myanmar the discourse of *thathanadaw* dominated, allowing to present the relation between the Buddha's teachings and other creeds as a dichotomy of right and wrong views. Colonialism changed the rules of the game by bringing in a new dominating discourse of variety of religions where Buddhism was one of the many and superior position was by default reserved for Christianity. In this context, by introducing the terms *bada* and *botdabada* into Burmese, Christian missionaries were subverting the special position of precolonial *thathana*. To win this game, at least for themselves, the Burmese actors had to appropriate the new discourse and demonstrate the superiority of Buddhism as a religion among other religions (just like Ledi Hsayadaw did).

The shift of social implications of the term *botdabada*—from a tool of missionary/scholarly classification to a mechanism of self-affirmation—is confirmed by the fact that by the 1920s, the majority of Burmans had begun to refer to themselves using the new term “Buddhists.”⁵⁶ *Botdabada* became a kind of convenient catchword used alongside with *thathana*. (The latter term remained used extensively as a designation of Buddha's teaching but did not become a term of personal self-reference.) How deep this term had penetrated the popular usage is evidenced by the case of Satya Narayan Goenka, a famous meditation teacher, who had to convince the Burmese establishment that there is no such term as “Buddhism” in the scriptures.⁵⁷ Another example is the phrase “To be a Burmese is to be a Buddhist,” the slogan of the Burma Socialist Programme Party during the 1980s.

Making it a religion: From *thathanadaw* to *botdabada*, from observances to doctrine

It remains to be explored how *thathanadaw* based on a hierarchy of observances became a *thathana* synonymic with *botdabada* or doctrinally defined Buddhism. This transition which in fact predates the colonial conquest was a gradual one. It was a result of a much broader process than colonization, that of global development of the social order of modernity. Rapid integration of Burmese polity into a larger world in the second half of the eighteenth century and related dynamics of its social system stimulated the development of less-subjective identities and erosion of discourse centered on the court or overlord himself. The earliest attempt I know of to define the experience of *thathanadaw* not as a set of observances but as a set of propositions was made about 1818 by king Badonmin whose experience with monastic reform convinced him that contemporary ritual traditions could not stand the critical scrutiny and the message

of the Buddha should be extracted directly from the *suttas*. In a work called “Views of Hpo-daw-hpaya” (*Hpo-daw-hpaya ayu-wada-sadan*) he recapitulated his beliefs, concerns and doubts producing a text fascinatingly different from any earlier Burman writings about *thathana*.⁵⁸

His views, too radical for his time, never spread beyond marginal segments of the Burmese religious system and were rendered less relevant by its later developments. Still the task of supplementing a set of practices associated with notions of *thathana* with a disposable set of doctrines was not ignored. By the late nineteenth century, texts where those who stay in the fold of *thathana* were defined as persons not only doing something, but also knowing and recognizing certain points began to appear. That was one of the important steps toward separation of practice from practitioners and development of more universal definitions of Buddhists and Buddhism.

One such work was the already mentioned “Taste of Liberation” by U Hpo Hlaing. Classifying the Burmans as the “people who venerate the Exalted Buddha,” he however commented that many of them lack the knowledge of mind and matter, could not understand the key notion of non-self (*anatta*), and moreover would not like to hear about it. As they venerate the Buddha they wouldn’t dare to object to the veracity of this doctrine but they would be unhappy with its implications. Adherents of other creeds who don’t venerate the Buddha would at once challenge this doctrine on substantial grounds.

According to U Hpo Hlaing, these non-Buddhists (U Hpo Hlaing himself did not use this term) would readily agree with *dhamma*-inspired practice of charity and donations, the observance of the precepts regarding morality and even on the notions of impermanence and suffering, but they would never accede to non-self as this would mean the denial of God. Thus he remarked that, “it should be understood that those people who stay outside of *thathana* have not destroyed the wrong views even if they venerate Myanma (i.e., Burman) monks, listen to Myanma sermons, observe *uposatha* days, make donations, and build monasteries and rest houses.”⁵⁹ Further he stressed that to achieve *nibbāna* the practice must be rooted in the doctrinal concept of Noble Eightfold Path. Simple ritual behavior was not enough.⁶⁰

Thus, by the means of comparison U Hpo Hlaing defined the key points of his creed and introduced certain general requirements for those who want to follow the path to liberation.⁶¹ U Hpo Hlaing’s radical statement was that the actual entry into community of “right-viewed” is achieved not by observances or ritual, but by embracing certain doctrines. This testifies the process of separation of the teaching from its practitioners and shows that by the late nineteenth century some Burmans already could differentiate what later was called “nominal” and “real” Buddhism though in different terms.

The final step in supplanting the observances with forms of knowledge as requirements for a “one who call himself a Buddhist” could be seen in “The Illumination of an Excellent Man” (*Ottamapurithadipani*) compiled in 1900 by Ledi Hsayadaw, not incidentally a good acquaintance of U Hpo Hlaing. The

prolific author presented there a list of right views or understandings necessary for Buddhists and identified *ariyas* as the only true Buddhists because for them such knowledge becomes permanent and would not be lost with a new birth, if there would be any.⁶² In the light of this statement the whole project of Ledi Hsayadaw's pioneering work in creating a large body of texts explaining the key aspects of the Buddhist doctrine to the mass reader may be considered as a theoretical contribution toward making all the people of the world true Buddhists.⁶³

Conclusion

Existing secondary literature on the history of Burmese Buddhism often reduces the influence of colonialism simply to the disorganization of *samgha*, its segmentation and the rise of political/nationalist Buddhism. Conceptual history and changes in the underlying social system are barely touched. Arguments presented in this chapter make it clear that the colonial period in Myanmar had other far-reaching implications for its religious system. The introduction of overarching concepts of "religion," "Buddhism," and its followers together with a parallel recasting of the discourse of *thathanadaw* enabled new identities with much broader application than any of those developed by the precolonial indigenous thinking. Both these concepts and identities were claimed both for religious and political purposes by the Buddhist reformers and political activists.

Such a creation of new identity for a community of coreligionists and in a sense a creation of a new community itself as it happened in Myanmar with transition from *thathanadaw* to *botdabada* may be well compared with the data presented in this volume by Donald Sutton and Kang Xiaofei, who explore the merging of religion and ethnicity in the Chinese thinking of ethnic minorities in the twentieth century and creation of the category of ethno-religion. There religion and its forms also act as a defining characteristic of community. At the same time, local actors among ethnic minorities find ways of asserting their interests and claiming their traditions using the current CCP discourse on the religion in China. The similar issue is raised in the chapter by Jennifer Connolly, who shows that Christian missionary work among the Dayaks and conversion helped to create and define a community of Dayak people which did not exist during precolonial times. There religion again served as an important means of expressing the identity of this new community and promoting their interests against the Malays.

Finally, a comparison might be made with the chapter on Ōmoto by Nancy Stalker, who explains the success of this Japanese new religious movement by its ability to appropriate new tools for proselytizing thus creating a change in supply side and reaching broader segments of the population. Development of the discourse of *botdabada* to which both external and Burman actors contributed may be seen as such a change in supply side which offered a clearer and coherent

statement of Buddhist identity applicable to anyone desiring it and not predicated on ascribed social status. While the precolonial system of *thathanadaw* fell back, it cleared the space for restatement of purposes and activation of previously marginalized segments leaving behind huge cultural heritage, sophisticated traditions of learning and practice, and numerous actors, both monastic and lay, were ready to adapt to new social spaces and develop new social ties and identities.

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Notes

1. The official name of the country in English was changed from Burma to Myanmar in 1989. The present article uses the latter term. The term “Burmese” is used to denote all people living in Myanmar while Burman (changed to Bamar in official usage) refers to majority ethnic group.
2. Myanmar was annexed by the British as a result of the three Anglo-Burmese wars of 1824–1826, 1852 and 1885. First, the coastal territories of Rakhine (Arakan) and Taninthayi (Tenasserim) as well as Assam and Manipur in present India were annexed, while in 1852 the British consolidated their hold on the coast by annexing the province of Pegu (Bago). The remaining parts of Myanmar became the possession of the British crown on 1 January 1886.
3. In this chapter I have used Pāli Buddhist terminology instead of Sanskrit (i.e., *saṃgha* instead of *saṅgha*, *dhmma* instead of *dharma*, *nibbāna* instead of *nirvāna*, etc.) as Pāli, not Sanskrit, was the language of the scriptures in Myanmar. Preference for Pāli may pose a minor problem for a general reader more familiar with the Sanskrit spelling but from methodological point of view it is more consistent.
4. John Ross Carter, “The Origin and Development of ‘Buddhism’ and ‘Religion’ in the Study of Theravada Buddhist Tradition,” in *On Understanding Buddhists: Essays on the Theravada Tradition in Sri Lanka* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 9–25.
5. Gustaaf Houtman, “How a Foreigner Invented Buddhendom in Burmese: From Tha-tha-na to Bok-da’ba-tha,” *Journal of the Anthropological Society at Oxford*, 21, no. 2 (1990), 113–128.
6. Houtman, “How a Foreigner Invented Buddhendom,” 114–116. Houtman himself doubted that a single person could be held responsible for introduction of the new term.
7. Kitsiri Malalgoda, “Concept and Confrontations: A Case Study of *Agama*,” in *Sri Lanka: Collective Identities Revisited*, ed. Michael Roberts. vol. 1 (Colombo: Marga, 1997), 55–78. See also Kitsiri Malalgoda, “Sinhalese Buddhism: Orthodox and Syncretic, Traditional and Modern,” *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, 2, no. 2 (1972), 164.

8. See, for example, Gananath Obeyesekere, "Buddhism," in *Global Religions: An Introduction*, ed. Mark Juergensmeyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 63–77; Gananath Obeyesekere, "Buddhism, Ethnicity and Identity: A Problem of Buddhist History," in *Buddhism, Conflict and Violence in Modern Sri Lanka*, ed. Mahinda Deegalle (London: Routledge, 2006), 134–162; Michael Roberts, *Sinhala Consciousness in the Kandyan Period 1590s to 1815* (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2003).
9. Obeyesekere, "Buddhism," 63–64; Obeyesekere, "Buddhism, Ethnicity and Identity."
10. David Scott, "Religion in Colonial Civil Society," in *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 53–69. The quotes are from pp. 60 and 69.
11. The only one of these terms which has been used in precolonial Myanmar was Theravāda, but its usage was infrequent and circumscribed to some very specific contexts. It clearly didn't function as a description of system of beliefs and practices maintained in the country. Only in the 1950s did it enter the mainstream usage; conspicuously enough, it was (and still is) used mostly in the compound "Theravāda Buddhism" (*theirawada botdabada*) which is a good proof of the lateness of its indigenization. Connoting the original and most pure form of Buddhism based on the Pāli canon Theravāda soon became the official designation for Buddhism practised in Myanmar.
12. For the discussion of colonial constructions of Buddhism and its influence on contemporary Buddhists see John Ross Carter, "The Coming of 'Early Buddhism' to Sri Lanka," in *On Understanding Buddhists*, 27–35; Philip Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); *Curators of the Buddha: the Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), especially the chapter by Charles Hallisey. Also Judith Snodgrass, "Colonial Constructs of Theravāda Buddhism: Current Perspectives on Western Writing on Asian Tradition," in *Traditions in Current Perspective* (Yangon: Universities Historical Research Centre, 1996), 79–98; Patrick Jory, "Thai and Western Buddhist Scholarship in the Age of Colonialism: King Chulalongkorn Redefines the Jatakas," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 61, no. 3 (2002): 891–918; Donald Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); N. J. Girardot, "Max Müller's Sacred Books and the Nineteenth-Century Production of the Comparative Science of Religions," *History of Religions*, 41, no. 3 (2002): 213–250. The formulation of characteristics of the Western discourse is mine.
13. I use the term "system of *thathanadaw*" instead of what is usually called "precolonial Burmese Buddhism." *Thathanadaw* is a form of the term *thathana* with honorific affix added, this form was used more often than *thathana* as being more respectful.
14. See Michael M. Ames, "Magical-animism and Buddhism: A Structural Analysis of the Sinhalese Religious System," in *Religion in South Asia*, ed. Edward B. Harper (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 28–30; Heinz Bechert, "Contradictions in Sinhalese Buddhism," in *Contributions to Asian Studies. Vol. 4. Tradition and Change in Theravada Buddhism: Essays on Ceylon and Thailand in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Bardwell L. Smith (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 11–12; Mark A. Ehman, "Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon" in *Buddhism a Modern Perspective*, ed. Charles Prebish (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press,

1975), 163–169; Richard F. Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* (London: Routledge, 1988); Richard Gombrich, “Is the Sri Lankan War a Buddhist Fundamentalism?” in *Buddhism, Conflict and Violence*, 34.

Canonical expression “the field of merit” means that *saṃgha* is especially worthy of veneration and donations by the nature of its calling and such deeds would bear the most wholesome results in the present and future births.

15. Jane Bunnag, *Buddhist Monk, Buddhist Layman: A Study of Urban Monastic Organization in Central Thailand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 20, 30; F. Bruce Morgan, “Vocation of Monk and Layman: Signs of Change in Thai Buddhist Ethics,” in *Contributions to Asian Studies* 4: 68–69; Robert C. Lester, *Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973), 5–8, 47, 109–129.
16. Lester, *Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia*, 7.
17. These arguments are summarized in such works as Bimala Churn Law, “Nirvana and Buddhist Laymen,” *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 14 (1932–1933): 80–86; P. D. Premasiri, “The Social Relevance of the Buddhist Nibbāna Ideal,” in *Buddhist Thought and Ritual*, ed. David J. Kalupahana (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 45.
18. This position is derived from the passage in *Samantapāsādikā*, a commentary on Pāli Vinaya (Sp 1291). Different approach reflected in the commentary on *Dīgha Nikāya* where the age of *arahats* was extended to 4000 years (Sv 899) was ignored by Burman monks until the late nineteenth to early twentieth century when it was used to demonstrate that *thathana* exists in a full-fledged condition. See Atula Hsayadaw, *Nan-zin-pot-hsa amei-ahpei kyan* (Enquiries of a Line of Kings—Questions and Answers) (Yangon: Hanthawadi, 1915), 29–30; *Pot-hsa-vi-thit-za-ni-kyan-sa* (Answers to Questions) (Yangon: Aso-ya, 1875), 9–11; Ledi Hsayadaw, *Thathana-than-shin-yei-khaw thathanawithawdani* (Purification of Sāsana). 2nd ed. (Monywa, etc.: Mya Hsu Mun, 2004), vol. 1, 50–64.
19. *Pot-hsa-vi-thit-za-ni*, 9–11.
20. Pahtama Maungdaung Hsayadaw, *Amei-daw-hpei* (Answers to King’s Questions) (Mandalay: Zambu-meit-hswei, 1961), 588–591; Win Maung, “*Mandalei-hkit-botda-thathanawin* (History of Buddhism during Mandalay Period)” (M.A. diss., Mandalay Arts and Sciences University, 1978), 7–9.
21. Despite such position having had no scriptural support, Burmans usually saw *pariyatti*, *paṭipāṭti*, and *paṭivedha* as three *thathanas*, not as *saddhammas*.
22. In 1806, Hsinde Hsayadaw (1744–1816) referred to *pariyatti* and *paṭivedha* as “property (*ot-sa*) of monks.” See Hsinde Hsayadaw, *Tharana-di-wineithsaya-kyan* (Decision on Refuge and Other [Observances]) (Yangon: Myanma-than-daw-hsin, 1882), 6.
23. See the use of term *paṭipāṭti* in the palm leaf manuscript no. Kin 85 at the National Library (NL), Yangon, Myanmar, folio *gan recto*; Atula Hsayadaw, *Nan-zin-pot-hsa*, 27–28; Mahadamathingyan, *Thathana-lingaya sadan* (Embellishment of Sāsana) (Yangon: Hanthawadi, 1956), 236.
24. The social divide was probably even deeper as the author of an early eighteenth century monastic history claimed that to maintain their moral standing his ancestors avoided any contacts with members of crown service groups, goldsmiths and pleaders. (The last two categories were ostracized because they habitually embezzled clients’ valuables and told lies. The reasons for shunning crown service groups are not stated.) See Ms NL Kin 85, folio *gu recto*.

25. For instance, in 1729 king Taninnganwei-min (1714–1733) asked five royal teachers who supervised religious examinations to pass their judgment on a prolonged dispute on proper dress for novices “taking into account *thathana* of monks and *thathana* of laity, these two.” (Palm leaf manuscript NL Kin 58, folio *kaw recto*.)
26. Pahtama Maungdaung Hsayadaw, *Amei-daw-hpei*, 222.
27. Atula Hsayadaw, *Nan-zin-pot-hsa*, 26. Only kings who reigned over the realm where *thathana* reposed were considered its donors. See *Zambudipa-uhsaung-kyan* (Crown of Jambudīpa), ed. John S. Furnivall (Yangon: Myanma-nain-ngan-thuteithana-athin, 1960), 8.
28. On the concept of *dhammadīpa* see Kitsiri Malalgoda, “Millennialism in Relation to Buddhism,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 12 (1970): 434–441; Peter Schalk, “Semantic Transformations of the Dhammadīpa,” in *Buddhism, Conflict and Violence*, 86–92.
29. For references to *thathanadaw-ti-ya* see, for example, *Zambudipa-uhsaung-kyan*, 8, 48, a collection of documents assembled in the 1760s but reflecting views current in the early seventeenth century. In 1822 the envoy to the court of Cochinchina was instructed to start his presentations saying that his country was the place where *thathana* flourished and demonstration thereof. (*The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598–1885*, ed. Than Tun, vol. VIII (Kyoto: The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1988), 391.) As for narratives substantiating such a claim, “Celebrated Chronicle” (*Yazawin-gyo*) of Shin Thilawuntha composed in 1520 is instructive. (Shin Thilawuntha, *Yazawin-gyo*, ed. U Hpe Maung Tin (Yangon: Wuntha-yeik-hka, n.d.), 76.)
30. The theory implied Myanmar’s precedence over other lands. It apparently contradicted Sinhalese Mahāvihāra scheme of transmission of *sāsana* reflected in Pāli commentaries and historical literature. Sinhalese tradition saw the teaching transmitted through three recitals (*saṅgīti*) of the scriptures which took place at the Indian cities of Rājagaha, Vesālī, and Pāṭaliputta in the years 1, 100, and 234 after the *parinibbāna* of the Buddha, respectively. In year 236 *sāsana* was brought to Sri Lanka by monk Mahinda, son of king Asoka, and there it was supposed to be preserved till its disappearance. In contrast, Burman lists of royal cities assigned only the first 100–300 years after *parinibbāna* as the period when Sri Lanka was the mainstay of the teaching. Afterwards it supposedly shifted to Myanmar and moved between cities there.
31. Alexey Kirichenko, “Living with the Future: Succession of Royal Cities Preserving Sasana and Its Influence on the History of Myanmar and Myanmar Historical Writing,” in *Myanmar Historical Commission Conference Proceedings*, pt. 2 (Yangon: Myanmar Historical Commission, 2005), 1–37.
32. U Kala, *Mahayazawingyi* (Big Great Chronicle), vol. 3 (Yangon: Hanthawadi, 1961), 301; Mahadamathingyan, *Thathana-lingaya sadan*, 180.
33. Palm leaf manuscript no. 1447 at the Universities’ Historical Research Centre (UHRC), Yangon, Myanmar, folio *zī v*.
34. Shei-haung-sapei-thuteithi-ta-u, *Nyaung-yan-hkit amei-daw-mya* (Royal Orders of Nyaung-yan Period), vol. 2 (Yangon: Myanma-hmu-beiman Sapei-ban, n.d.), 91, 96–97; *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598–1885*, ed. Than Tun, vol. IV (Kyoto: The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1986), 615.
35. See, for example, the following two nineteenth-century handbooks for the laity and monks: Hsinde Hsayadaw, *Tharana-di-wineithsaya*; Namaw Hsayadaw, *Thila-withawdani-kyan* (Purification of Moral Conduct) (Yangon: Thathana-yei-uzi-htana, 1992).

36. Commentaries differentiated between going for refuge of common worldlings and *ariyas*; see summary in John Ross Carter, “The Notion of Refuge,” in *On Understanding Buddhists*, 55–70; *The Threefold Refuge in the Theravāda Buddhist Tradition*, ed. John Ross Carter (Chambersburg: Anima Books, 1982). Burman monk Atula Hsayadaw (1700–1786) added to it “lay going for refuge” and “monastic going for refuge”: the former implied the observance of a lay devotee, the latter—taking of refuge by novice during his initiation into novicehood (Atula Hsayadaw, *Nan-zin-pot-hsa*, 36). Such interpretation effectively isolated monks from basic common observance with the laity.
37. As efforts to promote correct going for refuge I understand the attempts of court monks of the eighteenth century to limit the ritual observances not supported by canonical texts (enthusiasm for astrology, veneration of evil deities and spirits as well as deities revered by “wrong-viewed” ethnic groups) which they found detrimental to observance of *sarapa* and thus the condition of *thathana*. See RCAMM 610, fols. *kaw’ r*, *gei v*—*r*; RCAMM 544, fols. *hpi r*—*hpu v*. To the same category belong measures taken by the Burman kings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to prohibit gambling and consumption of alcohol and opium among lay devotees, introduce regular observance of fasting days (*uposatha*) at the court, support the communities of lay devotees who took additional vows besides the Five Precepts, etc.
38. Note, for example, Myaungnan-kyaung Hsayadaw (d. 1679) famous phrase “There is no Law in the Shan Country” (*shan-pyi-taya-ma-ya*) mentioned in UHRC 1447, folio *zī v*. The term “*meikhsadeikhti*” extended to Chinese, Indians, Europeans and numerous hill peoples. See, for example, RCAMM 544, fols. *hpi r*—*hpu v*; Mahadamathingyan, *Thathana-lingaya sadan*, 36; *Royal Orders*, VIII: 426.
39. Prem Pahlajrai, “Indian Doxographies—Why Six *Darsanas*? Which Six?” (paper presented at 2004 Graduate Student Colloquium in Asian Studies “Asia: Intersections and Interpretations,” University of Washington, Seattle, 22 May 2004), <http://students.washington.edu/prem/Colloquium04-Doxographies.pdf> (accessed 15 June 2006).
40. I’m grateful to Timur Koraev for this information.
41. Yandameit Kyawhtin, *Yeizagyo hkondaw hpyathton* (Decisions of Yeizagyo Court) (Yangon: Hanthawadi, 1973), 24–26.
42. U Hpo Hlaing, *Wimotti-yatha-kyan-hnin kamahtana-ggahana-wineithsaya-kyan* (Taste of Release; Decision on Taking up the Subjects for Meditation) (Yangon: Hanthawadi, 1953).
43. Hpo Hlaing, *Wimotti-yatha-kyan*, 56.
44. *Ibid.*, 71.
45. *A Dictionary of Buddhism and Burmese Literature*, comp. Rev. J. Wade (Maulmain: American Baptist Mission Press, 1852). The first use of the term *botdabada* made by a Burman Buddhist monk known to me was in Maingkhaing Hsayadaw’s (1843–1900) work of 1886 (Maingkhaing Hsayadaw, *Tipeitaka-vineithsaya-kyan* (Decisions on Tipitaka), vol. 1 (Yangon: Kaya-thukha, 1971), 14). Interestingly, *botdabada* was not the only term missionaries used. They also tried to appropriate *thathana* for “religion” (and speak of Christianity as “*khriyan-thathana*,” Buddhism as “*botda-thathana*,” etc.) and *meikhsadeikhti* for heathen. However, these usages did not enjoy popularity in indigenous discourse. The only relic of that attempt now is the word for “missionary,” which was a reference to an earlier “*thathanapyu-hsaya*” (teacher propagating the *thathana*). Christian missionaries are thus called “*khriyan-thathanapyu-hsaya*.”

46. Thant Myint-U, *The Making of Modern Burma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 221–222, 243–244. The closest parallel is Sri Lanka. The same phenomenon was also observed in India where “in seemingly nonpolitical administrative activities like census taking, the British use of unequivocal categories to classify a religious reality that was complex and mingled promoted a clarification and hardening of religious distinctions.” Richard H. Davids, introduction to *Religions of India in Practice*. ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 48.
47. *Judson’s Burmese-English Dictionary, Revised and Enlarged by R.C. Stevenson* (Rangoon: Baptist Board of Publications, 1893), 794.
48. Kitsiri Malalgoda, “The Buddhist-Christian Confrontation in Ceylon, 1800–1880,” *Social Compass* XX, no. 2 (1973), 171–200; Kitsiri Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society 1750–1900: A Study of Religious Revival and Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 213–231.
49. See, for example, the following writings of Ledi Hsayadaw—“Clarifications Concerning the Sayings of Christian Shwei Kyein Gwin” composed in 1914 and “The Clarification about the Four Great Teachings” written about 1918 in Ledi Hsayadaw, *Thathana-than-shin-yei*, 2: 100–187, 1: 128–206. Also his “Answers to Eleven Points [Raised] by a Christian” (1901), “Sixteen Answers and Reply to Questions [Raised] by Christians from Zigongyi” (undated) and “A Reply to Questions [Concerning the Publication] in ‘The Evangelist’ Newspaper” (1919) in Ledi Hsayadaw, *Ledi-pothsa-ahpei-paung-gyot-kyan-gyi* (The Anthology of Ledi Hsayadaw’s Answers to Questions) 2nd ed. (Yangon: Amyotha, 1923), vol. 1, 1–72.
50. The articles “A Mission of Love from Burma” and “The Instructions of Youth in Buddhist Piety” by Chan Htwan Oung, Arakanese pleader from Akyab, give a telling example. Unfortunately the cover of the pamphlet I have used is missing and I cannot provide bibliographical details.
51. I’m indebted to Alicia Turner for all my information on this association.
52. Ledi U Wannita, *Ledi-mahatheiyotpatti-katha* (The Biography of Ledi Hsayadaw) (Yangon: Hanthawadi, 1956), 106–123.
53. Young Men’s Buddhist Association of Sri Lanka was formed in 1898 at Borella.
54. Ledi Hsayadaw, *Thathana-than-shin-yei*, 1: 128.
55. Ledi Hsayadaw, *Thathana-thampatti-dipani-kyan* (Mandalay: Gunawadi, 1926). The English title suggested in U Maung Gyi’s translation was “The Essence of Buddhism.”
56. I don’t imply that this change was effected by either Ledi Hsayadaw (though he made a huge contribution toward reshaping the social workings of *thathana* in colonial Myanmar) or YMBA. I mean that these examples testify the moment of arrival, an accomplished fact.
57. *Don’t You Teach Buddhism? An Interview with S.N. Goenka*. 8 March 2005. <http://www.saigon.com/~anson/ebud/ebmed082.htm> (accessed 22 September 2005).
58. *Royal Orders*, VI: 352–393.
59. Hpo Hlaing, *Wimotti-yatha-kyan*, 74.
60. *Ibid.*, 126–127.
61. Shifting the focus from practice to doctrine and belief and comparing *dhamma* with other creeds also allowed Hpo Hlaing to use an inclusive term “people who venerate the Exalted Buddha” and thus transcend an earlier status differentiation.
62. Ledi Sayadaw, *A Manual of the Excellent Man*, trans. U Tin Oo. <http://www.aimwell.org/Books/Ledi/Uttama/uttama.html> (accessed 12 December 2006).

63. Throughout his lifetime Ledi Hsayadaw had produced more than one hundred works on various aspects of Buddhism. In contrast to typical monastic works of precolonial period the majority of his writings combined the orientation toward the mass audience with systematic exposition on doctrinal points or categories (the earlier works usually were meant for specific audiences and were rather commentaries/elaborations on a certain text or instructions/exhortations on certain observances). An attempt at the global outreach was made through composition of a number of texts aimed specifically at foreign readers and establishment of association for missionary work abroad.

3

Publishing Eastern Buddhism: D. T. Suzuki's Journey to the West

Judith Snodgrass

We have some schools in China and Japan whose equivalent or counterpart cannot be found in the so-called Northern Buddhism.... Therefore it may be more proper to divide Buddhism into three, instead of two, geographical sections: Southern, Northern and Eastern.¹

The now widely used category “Eastern Buddhism”, tentatively proposed here by Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki (1870–1966) in his ground-breaking work *Outlines of the Mahāyāna* (1907), would later be institutionalized through his prolific publications in both English and Japanese. *The Eastern Buddhist*, the journal of the society he and his American born wife, Beatrice Lane Suzuki (1875–1939), founded in 1921, continues as a flagship journal of Mahāyāna Buddhist studies. The term is, however, a modern one, coined in 1893 by Japanese delegates to the World's Parliament of Religions at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago; the object it denotes, shaped by the rationalizations of Meiji Buddhist revival and Japanese negotiations with an already well-established Western discourse on Buddhism.² The delegation to Chicago had attempted to intervene in the discourse, to claim the right to speak on the subject, and to share in the esteem that Buddhism enjoyed in certain Western intellectual circles at the time. By creating Eastern Buddhism, a new category, they aimed to attach to the Mahāyāna Buddhism of Japan all that the West admired of “Pure Buddhism”, the orientalist construct resulting from the philological study of the Pāli texts of Theravāda Buddhism (Southern Buddhism), and to distance it from the then widespread denigration of other forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism (Northern Buddhism).³

Suzuki's need to posit its existence a decade later points to the lack of success of this initial bid for recognition, and to the direct connection between the delegation's mission and his publications. These were both a consequence and continuation, at least in part, of the Chicago project—an attempt to fulfil its aims, informed by a clear-sighted realization of the difficulties they had faced and a determination to overcome them. His success, I argue, was due to his skilful use of the rules controlling the production and circulation of truth—the very

rules that had worked against his predecessors—through which he attained the authority to be taken seriously within the Western discourse, and to his ability to disseminate difficult concepts to a popular readership. Through Suzuki's work Eastern Buddhism has become a well-established field of academic study. The features of it he emphasized in his publications persist in current global manifestations of Zen, and in popular understanding of Buddhism more generally. Suzuki is, in Edward Said's term, the "inaugural hero" of Mahāyāna Buddhist studies in the West.⁴

This chapter looks at Suzuki's earliest writings, situating them in the broader context of Buddhist revival in Meiji Japan, and his continuation of its mission to introduce Mahāyāna Buddhism in the West. It reassesses the motivations for and consequences of Suzuki's 11-year apprenticeship at La Salle, Illinois (1897–1908) with German-born American philosopher and publisher Dr Paul Carus (1852–1919) within this perspective. It is therefore necessary to start with a brief account of the earlier formation of Eastern Buddhism as presented at Chicago, before moving on to its impact on Carus which created the opportunity and incentive for Suzuki's journey to the West, and finally to Suzuki's work at La Salle that brought Eastern Buddhism to successful publication.

Eastern Buddhism: Meiji Buddhism for the west

Eastern Buddhism, as presented in Chicago in 1893, was a selective presentation of the "new Buddhism" (*shin bukkō*) of Meiji Japan (1868–1912). This new Buddhism was a philosophical, rationalized, trans-sectarian and socially committed interpretation that had emerged from the restructuring of Buddhism and its role in society necessitated by the religious policy of the early Meiji state.⁵ It was formed in an intellectual climate imbued with the reality of Western dominance, and shaped by the tension inherent in defining a distinctive Japanese modernity when the West was the model and measure of the modern.

The tensions of Japanese modernity were particularly evident in the formation of the new Buddhism as revival leaders engaged with the West—denoted by the usefully encompassing term *ōbei* (literally Europe and America)—from the early years of the Meiji period. As early as 1876, young Buddhist monks Kasawara Kenjū and Nanjō Bunyū travelled to Oxford University to study the science of religion with eminent German Sanskrit scholar, Max Müller. There they learned the rules of philological analysis, and academic textual production that enabled them to create a modern Buddhist canon, a definitive work of modern scholarly reference which remains the basis of serious study of Mahāyāna Buddhism.⁶ They also observed the way that religion functioned in a modern social context, and from this came such Meiji Buddhist reform initiatives as the founding of the YMBA (1894), Sunday schools and youth camps, the formation of lay Buddhist organizations and the dissemination of vernacular texts,⁷ and an emphasis on philanthropic works. Kasawara and Nanjō were foundation life members of the Pāli Text Society, the inaugural academic association

for the study of Buddhism, founded in 1881 by T. W. Rhys Davids to collect, edit and translate the Theravāda canon. They established their credibility as scholars through their publications and their participation in academic societies. They also kept up to date with intellectual trends and disseminated the latest Western ideas for publication in Japanese Buddhist journals.⁸ In October 1891, for example, the Tokyo Buddhist press carried articles on Comte's humanitarianism, Spencer's philosophy, Max Müller's "Science of Religion", a translation of Dr Clark's "Ten Great Religions" and a review of Monier Williams's *Buddhism*. The new Buddhism that emerged from all this was defined in distinction from the superstitions and rituals of the past. It was, in Suzuki's words, the religion of "the educated that form the core of society", "guided by the leading edge in contemporary intellectual thought",⁹ that is, the intellectual trends of the contemporary Europe.

Buddhist revival rode a surge of enthusiasm to define Japanese modernity in distinctively indigenous terms after the failure in 1887 to revise Japan's unequal treaties with foreign nations. The consequent rejection of Westernization as the model for Japanese modernity coincided with growing interest in Buddhism in the West, and in this atmosphere, Buddhist reform leader Inoue Enryō called upon the patriotic spirit of "young men of talent and education", the Western-educated elite who would be the future leaders of the nation, to support Buddhism as the basis of the modern, sovereign state: "The best way Japanese can be made Japanese and Japan can remain independent is to preserve and propagate Buddhism."¹⁰ As he pointed out, Buddhism had been the basis of Japanese civilization for over a thousand years, and current Western interest in Buddhism as a humanist religion of the scientific age validated its essential modernity. The new Buddhism of Japan, stripped of all things irrational or superstitious, was both the ideal indigenous religion for a modern Japan, and the one area of human endeavour in which Japan could be a world leader. As he observed, "The advancement of science appeared to have induced an interest in Buddhism among the Christian people of the West" and, he continued, "even the Hīnayāna doctrine of Southern India was highly admired by them. How much more then must they glorify the wonderful doctrine of Mahāyāna?"¹¹

An opportunity to present Japanese Mahāyāna Buddhism to the West occurred not long after, with the invitation to participate in the World's Parliament of Religions. An open letter to the trans-sectarian Buddhist body, the All Sects Council, from "Concerned Buddhists" seeking official endorsement for a delegation to attend the parliament echoed Inoue's sentiments. Buddhism was the one thing that Japan could transmit to the West and thereby win regard, it argued; the invitation was therefore, a chance that came but once in a thousand years.¹² When official support was withheld, four clerics (Ashitsu Jitsuzen, Toki Hōryū, Shaku Sōen and Yatsubuchi Banryū) and two Buddhist laymen (Hirai Kinzō and Noguchi Zenshirō) who also acted as translators, formed an independent delegation to attend the event and present Japanese Buddhism in its Meiji

transformation, as Japan's contribution to the progress of the modern world. The delegate of particular note in this chapter is Shaku Sōen (1859–1919), abbot of Engakuji, the Rinzai Zen monastery at Kamakura, who in his promotion of Buddhist revival, taught Zen meditation to lay people. The young D. T. Suzuki was among them.

The letter from the “Concerned Buddhists” was quite explicit that the primary aim of taking Buddhism to the West was to establish the coincidence between Mahāyāna thought and the latest developments in Western philosophy. First on the list of items they deemed especially important to the present was explaining Buddhist idealism and the similarities and differences between it and philosophic idealism. Also of high priority were the Buddhists concept of *Pratitya samutpada* (Jp. *Inga rihō*)—translated by the Japanese delegates in the scientific mode of the time as “The Law of Cause and Effect”—the concept of nirvana, and the two approaches to awakening (Jp. *Shōjōnimon*). The relevance of these to gaining respect for Eastern Buddhism will become apparent below. The history and influence of Buddhism, its present and future prospects filled out the picture.¹³ I have elsewhere analysed the papers presented at Chicago in relation to these aims,¹⁴ so I will here briefly mention just a few points to illustrate the difficulties the delegates encountered and the extent of their engagement with Western Buddhist scholarship.

Eastern Buddhism and orientalist scholarship

The overriding problem the Japanese delegates faced in creating acceptance for Eastern Buddhism was that Western approval was not for any Asian practice but for “Pure Buddhism”, the reified product of orientalist scholarship, encapsulated in the 1880s’ publications of Rhys Davids¹⁵ and disseminated widely among a popular readership through Edwin Arnold’s epic poem, *The Light of Asia*.¹⁶ Following the paradigms of contemporary Protestant Christian scholarship, Buddhism was defined by the search for the very words of the historical teacher, the Buddha Sakyamuni, as revealed through philological analysis of the earliest possible texts, the Pāli canon of Theravāda Buddhism.

In spite of its rigorous academic methodology, the search for Pure Buddhism, was itself shaped by the concerns of the Christian West: the crisis of Christianity in an age of science.¹⁷ It attracted interest among Western scholars and intellectuals from about the mid-nineteenth century, a time when scientific knowledge had brought into question ideas of an immortal soul, an interventionist God and the divinity of Jesus. Buddhism and Christianity had much in common—most particularly in the lives of the two founders—but the two religions differed precisely on these points of contention. Buddhism taught of neither a permanent personal “soul”, nor a First Cause or Divine Creator. It was therefore seen to exemplify the possibility of a humanist ethical system—this was the position championed by liberal humanist T. W. Rhys Davids—or, alternately, as its detractors argued, proof of the inadequacy of agnosticism or atheism.¹⁸

Both positions, however, depended on the assumption of a “pure” Buddhism that was projected back into the far-distant past, and was emphatically a philosophy rather than a religion. Both dismissed contemporary Asian practices as degenerate. For Rhys Davids, even the earliest Pāli texts bore witness to the natural human tendency to fall into reverence and worship. The title “Buddha”, literally “Awakened One”, was itself evidence of this universal weakness. Like many other Western scholars, he therefore chose to write of Gautama (alternately Gotama), or Siddhartha, using the personal names of the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni (Sage of the Sakyas) rather than follow the canonical use of titles that indicate the Buddha’s transcendence of the human condition. Rituals, practices and worship were for Rhys Davids, not part of Buddhism at all, but evidence of the inability of weaker mortals to live up to its ideals. Mahāyāna Buddhism was for him, therefore, the ultimate degeneration:

As the stronger side of Gautama’s teaching was neglected the debasing beliefs in rites and ceremonies, and charms, and incantations, which had been the especial object of his scorn, began to live again, and grow vigorously, and spread like the Bīrana weed warmed by a tropical sun in marsh and muddy soil.¹⁹

His view of Buddhism, the academic orthodoxy of the time was defined against contemporary Asian practice, and most particularly, against Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The key features of this humanist reading of Buddhism were paradoxically reinforced by Christian critics such as Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, who deplored Buddhism as an example of “the materialist error”, and published his book *The Buddha and His Religion* (1860) “to prevent any serious minded reader from falling into such errors”.²⁰ Though Saint-Hilaire admired the Buddha—“with the sole exception of the Christ, there does not exist among the founders of religions a purer and more touching figure than that of the Buddha”²¹—the rhetoric balanced this with a highly derogatory account of the religion that had developed from his teachings. The Asian practices of “idolatry”, “devil worship” of observable Asian practices were proof of the failure of a non-divine system to meet the needs of mankind.²²

The point is that both Western critics and supporters discussed Buddhism in terms defined by the religious crisis of nineteenth-century Christianity. Their image of Buddhism belonged to the nineteenth-century Christian West, and its distinction from lived Asian practices was crucial. “Pure” Buddhism was a philosophy that had been taught by a great man, but Buddhism had come to operate throughout Asia as a religion. The discrepancy was variously accounted for in terms of Buddhism’s failure to meet the spiritual needs of its followers, or alternately, the inability of the people to live up to its austere demands, leaving lesser mortals (its Asian followers) to turn to ritual and idolatry. The result was that Asian Buddhists had to say on the subject was beside the point.

By the 1890s, the preceding decades of Western scholarship had established and agreed upon certain “facts”: the teaching was founded by a historical man, Gautama the Buddha, who had taught a system of ethical philosophy which had later developed features of a religion. This Pure Buddhism was atheistic or at least agnostic, denied the existence of an immortal soul and taught self-reliance rather than reliance on a saviour. Both supporters and detractors of this vision also agreed that the teachings of the Buddha had much in common with contemporary Western philosophy. The division of Southern and Northern Buddhism was generally accepted, but both were seen as degenerate. The West alone possessed the truth. Asian practitioners became, in the words of James D’Alwis, missionary to Ceylon, “merely nominal Buddhists who know little if anything about *genuine Buddhism as elucidated in the texts*”.²³

The task the Japanese delegates to Chicago faced was to lift Japanese Buddhism (*wa bukkkyō*) above this fray by creating a third category: Eastern Buddhism. This was possible because Western scholars, preoccupied with the pursuit of original, had so far ignored the Buddhism of Japan. Western knowledge of Mahāyāna Buddhism was limited to the translation of a few Sanskrit texts, and the preliminary encounters with the Buddhism of Tibet and Nepal. Since the aim of the Japanese mission to Chicago was to court interest in Buddhism among Western intellectuals, these existing assumptions were central to the representation of Eastern Buddhism. The Japanese presentation pivoted on the Western academic construct, and so did its reception at the Western, Christian congress in Chicago. If they were to write Eastern Buddhism into the orientalist scholarly discourse, they needed to do so in relation to its existing knowledge.

Eastern Buddhism at Chicago

The first hurdle the delegation faced was to satisfy the condition of authenticity of the Western academy: to establish that the Mahāyāna had been taught by the Buddha Sakyamuni. This was a key priority of the delegation to Chicago, as proclaimed in the titles of papers and publications (such as “The Law of Cause and Effect as Taught by the Buddha”, or “Outlines of the Mahāyāna as Taught by the Buddha”) and argued in their presentations. To counter the problem of the later date of the Mahāyāna sūtras they presented the Japanese tradition of *goji*, the five periods of the Buddha’s teaching.²⁴ According to this Tendai (Ch. Tiantai) tradition, the Mahāyāna was not only the teaching of the Buddha, but it was his first and his most complete teaching; the apparently diverse sects of Buddhism are related as graded and partial revelations of the one Truth of the Mahāyāna.

In the first period, immediately after his Awakening the Buddha taught the Avatamsaka sūtra of the Mahāyāna, but realizing that it was beyond the comprehension of his audience, he then explained the doctrines of the Hīnayāna, and proceeded with increasingly developed ideas of the truth, progressing in

the fifth period to the complete revelation of the Mahāyāna. The Theravāda, as one school among the many of the second period, was a mere preliminary, an accommodation to the incapacity of the Buddha's audience and a stepping stone toward the greater revelation. Whatever truth the Theravāda contains is encompassed within Eastern Buddhism, the One Vehicle (*Ekayāna*) that encompassed all the Buddha's teachings, the full disclosure of the universal truth that transcended boundaries of race, culture and time.²⁵ Needless to say, for an audience of nineteenth century Western academics, the *goji* argument failed to measure up against the evidence of the dating of canonical texts, and as we will see, Suzuki would approach the problem differently.

An even greater hurdle was explaining the meaning of the term "Buddha" to an audience who confidently assumed it was nothing more than a title denoting a particular, historical Asian sage. The Western emphasis on the historical Buddha as the Founder of Buddhism was problematic for followers of both Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions. While all Buddhists accept that Sakyamuni existed in human history he is not considered the founder of the religion, nor to be the only Buddha. In Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions alike, Sakyamuni is but the latest in a series of Buddhas born into the world to teach the eternal dharma. As Ceylon High Priest Sumangala complained on behalf of "orthodox Southern Buddhists" in a letter to the parliament in 1893, the term "Buddhist" was a Western invention. His religion was the *arya dharma* (the noble truth).²⁶ What was of central importance to Asian Buddhists was less the man than the eternal truth that he, like others before and others to come, had been born in the world to teach.

A further hurdle for the Japanese at Chicago, however, was that the simplistic reduction of "Buddha" to nothing more than a name completely eliminated any possibility of showing the parallels between Eastern Buddhism and philosophic idealism. This was a key objective and aimed to show that Eastern Buddhism concurred with the latest developments in Western philosophy; that it contained all the truth of Kant and Hegel without the "excess" that left these philosophies unresolved. This depended on a peculiarly Mahāyāna understanding of the Buddha as *dharmakāya*, the principle from which the universe is manifested.

In Chicago, Tendai scholar Ashitsu Jitsuzen addressed the problem most explicitly, by introducing the concept of the *Trikāya*, the Three Bodies of the Buddha.²⁷ This is a defining formulation of Mahāyāna traditions and teaches that the world is a manifestation of the *dharmakāya*, the Body of the Buddha as eternal, omnipresent and unchanging principle. The other two Bodies of the Buddha are the *sambhogakāya*, exemplified by Ashitsu as the bodhisattvas, Monju, Kannon and Seishi (in Sanskrit: *Manjusri*, *Avalokitesvara* and *Mahasthamaprabhata*, respectively) manifestations of "sacred wisdom, graceful humanity, and the sublime courage"; Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha, typifies the *nirmanakāya*, a manifestation of the eternal principle sent into this world to "preach and bring enlightenment" to all beings.²⁸ In this system, Sakyamuni is a Buddha, but not the only one; the world is a manifestation of Buddha as

the eternal principle, which is in turn, equated with mind, “The True Mind of Absolute Unity” (*tathatā*, Jp. *shinnyō*). All things have a Buddha nature, and all beings have the potential to become Buddha through mental cultivation.

Although these basic Buddhist concepts will now be familiar to many, in 1893—when almost nothing had been written in English about the Mahāyāna, and images of bodhisattvas were considered “idols”—they were extraordinarily new and different, quite literally *unheard of*. Indeed, when presented in a brief paper—a 20-minute limit was enforced—in less than perfect English, at a time before terms to translate these ideas had been standardized, and to a totally unprepared audience, the ideas were almost unintelligible.²⁹

The full implications of Buddhist idealism emerged when the conception of the Buddha as the nature of all things was combined with the inexorable working out of the consequences of actions embodied in the Buddhist conception of *Pratitya samutpada* presented most fully by Shaku Sōen in his paper “The Law of Cause and Effect as Taught by the Buddha”.³⁰ Together these concepts offered a non-interventionist system of moral retribution, through the inexorable working out of the consequences of actions. To quote Shaku Sōen, “the world as we know it is a consequence of the law of cause and effect acting within essence of mind”.³¹ The concept was also an extremely difficult one for the unprepared audience to grasp in a short presentation. It was more clearly expounded in Kuroda Toshio’s *Outlines of the Mahāyāna*, a handbook that had been prepared for distribution at the parliament,³² which explained, in appropriately idealist terms, that the Buddha as *dharmakāya* is the absolute reality that transcends the multitude of forms in the phenomenal world. It is the underlying reality upon which all phenomenal existence depends and is produced of. “All things in the universe, therefore, are mind itself”.³³

Explaining Buddhist idealism demanded a notion of Buddha radically different from what was understood in the West at that time. It not only disrupted Western assumptions of Buddhism, however. The conception of the world without creator or Providence that it offered was simply unthinkable for orthodox Christians at the time. As one delegate to the parliament explained, if we admit that “there may be a world of dependent beings each of whom depends on another, and no one of them nor all of them depend on an independent being... philosophy is made impossible and theology deprived of its subject matter.... such an admission would destroy thought itself”.³⁴

The transcendent conception of Buddha as mind was also fundamental to the objective of distancing Eastern Buddhism from accusations of nihilism and other-worldliness, accusations that were based on a translation of “nirvana” as “annihilation” or “extinction”.³⁵ As the Chicago delegates explained, Eastern Buddhism teaches four types of nirvana (*honrai jishōshōjō nehan*, *uyoe nehan*, *muyoe nehan*, *mujūshō nehan*), and while nirvana as it is in Pāli texts may be equivalent to extinction, the Mahāyāna concept of nirvana was different. In Eastern Buddhism, they explained, nirvana is not annihilation, not even an annihilation of the passions, which might imply an ascetic detachment from

the world (accusations of “Other-worldiness” were also to be avoided). “Attainment of nirvana”, in Eastern Buddhism meant “mastering the mind... abiding in truth... even among worldly relations.”³⁶ The distinctively Mahāyāna form of nirvana, “the highest state of nirvana” (*mujūsho nehan*) was a state of perfect wisdom when one who has attained complete awareness of reality elects not to dwell in tranquillity, but to actively work in the world for the benefit of sentient beings.³⁷

This conception of nirvana is personified in Avalokiteśvara (Jp. Kannon) the bodhisattva of compassion, who, in Meiji Japan, came to serve as a model of life in service to humanitarian ideals, and from this, evidence of Buddhism’s power to solve the problems of the modern world. Taking Avalokiteśvara as its ideal, the nirvana of Eastern Buddhism was not nihilistic, and far from demanding renunciation of worldly affairs in the pursuit of personal spiritual attainment, it enjoined its followers to devote themselves and the knowledge they attained to selfless work for society as a whole, “to engage in active exertion for humanity”.³⁸ The Bodhisattva’s vow of compassion also went some way to responding to the Christian charge that Buddhism “left man unaided”.

The delegation’s concern to present Eastern Buddhism’s two approaches to awakening (*shōjōnimon*) deserves a brief mention because it is another of the Chicago delegation’s aims that continued to feature in the work of D. T. Suzuki. The two approaches are awakening through one’s own efforts (*jiriki*) typified by Zen practice, and the path of dependence on the compassionate vows of Amida (*tariki*), taught by the Pure Land schools. Eastern Buddhism, which encompassed both, was therefore a religion of both intellect and emotions; one that was both a philosophy, and a religion that offered the ritual practices and devotional support that benefited the less spiritually or intellectually developed. Moreover, since the practices of Eastern Buddhism are based on the same principles as the philosophy they act to introduce people to the higher modes of the same truth, and thereby stimulated the evolution of mankind and progress of civilization, taking those who needed ritual support toward the philosophical. Because of this, Eastern Buddhism was a religion that could be held without compromise of modern thought, and one that was appropriate for all people, infinitely adaptable and universally applicable.

Paul Carus, Buddhism and the religion of science

If for the most part the messages of Eastern Buddhism fell on deaf, bewildered or outraged ears, they resonated strongly with Paul Carus, who recognized much in common between Eastern Buddhism and his own Religion of Science, a post-Kantian Christian monism. This is hardly surprising since the Japanese delegation had focused on those areas of religion of interest to Carus: Buddhism’s compatibility with science and philosophy, and especially on philosophic idealism. Most important was the conception of the world as the manifestation of the *dharmakāya*, expressed as universal mind, conditioned by the

Law of Cause and Effect. This resolved the crucial issue of moral retribution in the absence of an interventionist God; of encouraging ethical conduct without the threat of rewards and punishments to be meted out upon an immortal soul in the next world. Eastern Buddhism's positive and socially engaged interpretation of nirvana was also crucial to Carus, offering him a model for countering the charges of nihilism that were also directed at his own philosophy.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this presentation of Japanese Buddhism for Carus.³⁹ He had certainly been aware of Buddhism before the Chicago event—he wrote two short notes on it in 1890 (“The Religion of Resignation”, “Entry into Nirvana”⁴⁰)—but it was only after his introduction to Eastern Buddhism that he took it seriously. His radical change of attitude is clear in “Karma and Nirvana”, a paper he published within months of meeting the Japanese Buddhists.⁴¹ It opens with a statement of the widespread negative assumptions of Buddhism, presumably what he had believed Buddhism to be when he wrote “Religion of Resignation”, which he then overturned, point by point. It is a record of Carus's own revelation through his discovery of Eastern Buddhism, which sent him back to read the works of European Buddhist scholars. Quoting these, he established parallels between Buddhism and his Religion of Science. The *Trikāya* concept was central. He equated the *dharmakāya* with God the Father, the *nirmanakāya* with Jesus and the *sambhogakāya* with the Holy Ghost. His Buddhism, like his monism, does have a concept of deity, though not one his Christian critics could accept.⁴²

Carus's encounter with Eastern Buddhism gave him a new vocabulary of concepts with which to articulate his religion of science. The greater the definition of his ideas, and, as I see it, his debt to concepts of *dharmakāya* and *karma*, is apparent when we compare his paper “Religion of Science” of April 1893, written a few months before the parliament with his writings on the same subject several years later. The emphasis we see in “Karma and Nirvana” on East Buddhism's positive, this worldly, socially engaged interpretation of nirvana indicates just how important this was to him. As Thomas Tweed has astutely observed in his study of converts to Buddhism in early twentieth-century America, even for people seeking alternatives to Christianity, there were limits to dissent; there were key social values that could not be sacrificed.⁴³ The religion they turned to had to be positive, self reliant and life affirming. This was certainly true for Carus. The Buddha he presented in his book, *The Gospel of Buddha* (1894), was not a contemplative ascetic, but a robust, active and energetic “Americanized” Buddha.⁴⁴

The Gospel of Buddha is pivotal in the narrative of this paper. Though it continues to be read as a source of knowledge on Buddhism, Carus wrote it with the explicit intention of promoting his Religion of Science to an American, Christian audience.⁴⁵ As he states in his preface to the work, if the *Gospel* helped people understand Buddhism better, he wrote, this was incidental.

Its main purpose lies deeper still. The present book has been written to set the reader thinking on the religious problems of today. It sketches the picture of a religious leader of the remote past with a view of making it bear upon the living present and become a factor in the formation of the future.⁴⁶

That is, like everything he wrote in his extraordinarily productive career, *Gospel* was part of his mission to hasten the formation of the religion of the future, which he saw as the inevitable and ultimate perfection of Christianity in the Religion of Science. *The Gospel of Buddha* was the principle vehicle for this missionary effort.

Carus designed *Gospel* for a popular readership because a change in modes of thought of the magnitude he envisaged would have to take place among the mass of believers. It was not enough to reach just a few intellectuals. With a dazzling mastery of text and form, he very deliberately structured it to be reassuring, to show parallels and similarities with Christianity, right down to the illustrations, which are not those that any Buddhist would choose to depict the life of the Buddha, but which focus on Buddhist parallels with the life of Christ: the Buddha walking on water, at a wedding feast, cleansing a leper, bearing insult with dignity and so on.⁴⁷ *The Gospel of Buddha* presented a selective retelling of the life of the Buddha to teach Carus's Christian monism. With a clear eye on his audience, he set out to produce a work in prose rivalling the popular appeal of Edwin Arnold's extremely widely read epic poem, *The Light of Asia*, but with the authority of an academic work. The title and preface stressed his reliance on the canon: it was *The Gospel of Buddha Compiled from Ancient Records*. He appended a "Table of References" which purported to show that each chapter was based on a Buddhist text, a "full glossary of names and terms, and an exhaustive index".⁴⁸ To the non-specialist reader, those who would not bother to decode the abbreviations and trace them back to their sources, it was apparently impressive, a play of conformity directed to reassuring his reading public.⁴⁹ The title, the King's James style of language, and biblical chapter-and-verse format added an aura of religious authority. The recent republication of the book testifies to its enduring success. It has been in print continuously for over a century, and has sold over thirty million copies. Though problematic in terms of introducing the insights of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Carus' writings on Buddhism, disseminated through his journals *The Open Court*, *The Monist*, and the books from the Open Court Press, most particularly *The Gospel of Buddha*, facilitated acceptance of Buddhism among his predominantly Protestant, North-American readers.

Carus sent a copy of *The Gospel of Buddha* to his friend, Shaku Sōen, who decided to publish it in Japanese. The task of translation fell to his young disciple, Suzuki, and the first Japanese edition, *Budda no Fukuin*, appeared in 1895.⁵⁰ While unquestionably aware of the inadequacies of this work as a representation of Buddhism, Shaku Sōen and his colleagues had long recognized the need to win popular support for Buddhist revival, and saw it as a useful

response to the need for “a handy little book on Buddhism”, one that “could be read by anyone of a high school education”.⁵¹ He therefore welcomed Carus’s *Gospel*, even though, as Suzuki commented in his translator’s preface to the second edition, it was simplistic, suffered from omissions, too many revisions and had “the odour of a Westerner about it”.⁵² Suzuki also expressed an urgent need for a similar introductory book to be written by a Japanese Buddhist. In the context of Meiji reform, however, the fact that *Gospel* had been written by a Western philosopher and man of science—Suzuki’s prefatory biographical note on Carus made much of this—was part of its value, endorsing reform claims that Western intellectuals were turning to Buddhism as the religion of the future. Its flaws in were understanding proof of the need to support the promotion of Eastern Buddhism abroad. The point is that the book was published in Japan for reasons other than its accuracy as a representation of Buddhism, and that whatever misgivings Suzuki had about it, his part in the process introduced him to Carus’s skills in conveying new ideas to a broad general audience and opened the way for further contact.

The nirvana controversy and the rules of truth

As I have argued above, the main obstacle to the Japanese project of decentring the historical humanity of Sakyamuni and with it the negative assumptions of nirvana was the importance of this feature in Christocentric discourses of the time. The Western construct of Buddhism was not simply a matter of “exotica”—reports of the customs and beliefs of the colonial subjects—it was intimately entwined with the debates over the future of Christianity in an age of science. So attached were Western scholars to their image of Buddhism, that rather than consider an amendment to concepts such as nirvana that would encompass Mahāyāna ideas, they simply ruled Japanese Buddhist scholars out of the discourse, maintaining that the true definitions of Buddhism resided solely in the Pāli texts. This became very clear in a post-parliament exchange of letters published by Paul Carus as “A Controversy on Buddhism”.⁵³ The Reverend John Henry Barrows, who as Chairman of the World’s Parliament of Religions had hosted the Asian delegates there, gave a sermon in which he repeated all the nihilist assumptions of Buddhism that the Japanese delegates had so diligently distanced themselves from. This was reported in the *Chicago Tribune* (January 13, 1896) and came to Paul Carus’s attention. Carus wrote to Shaku Sōen informing him of it and enclosing the draft of a response he had written on behalf of Shaku Sōen expressing the Japanese Buddhists’ disappointment and reiterating the Eastern Buddhist position. Shaku Sōen wrote in response:

The reply you have written for us is just and thoroughly expresses what we wish to utter, and I hope it will remove these important misconceptions concerning Buddhism which are cherished by American preachers and scholars. I myself examined it repeatedly. Though I was more than once tempted to

add my own opinion to that reply, yet I did not dare to do so, thinking that such a beautiful statement as this should not be defiled by touching with any unskilled hands. The only alteration I have made is the adding of the word Vairochana-Buddha next to the word Amitabha-Buddha. I ordered Suzuki to copy the reply and to send it to Dr. Barrows by the same mail with this letter to you. I do not doubt that he will be magnanimous enough to make it public in the Chicago daily papers or in some religious paper.⁵⁴

The subsequent exchange focussed on the meaning of nirvana and used the rules of Western orientalist scholarship to silence Buddhist expertise. The Reverend Dr F. F. Ellinwood responded on Barrows's behalf, explaining at length and with reference to philological opinion, the "real" meaning of the term. He appeared to be impressed by the concept of bodhisattva in Eastern Buddhism but commented that it "comes nearer to the doctrine of the apostle Paul than those of Sakyamuni".⁵⁵ In other words, any positive conceptions present in Eastern Buddhism were the result of contact with Christianity.

The incident showed very clearly that Mahāyāna remained beyond the pale, conveniently kept there by a determined insistence on the academic protocols of the time. Western scholars continued to seek the truth of Buddhism in the Pāli texts. Where Japanese Buddhism differed from Western scholarship, it was declared in error. Shaku Sōen and Ashitsu Jitsuzen, two leading Japanese Buddhist scholars, were dismissed as "so-called Buddhists"; their claims for Mahāyāna Buddhism evidence, as Rhys Davids put it, of "how astounding is the gulf on all sides between *popular beliefs* and the conclusion of science".⁵⁶ They clearly had no right to speak on the subject. Even Paul Carus who seized upon the world-affirming definitions of Eastern Buddhism to validate his Christian monism compiled the evidence to substantiate his argument by trawling through existing orientalist translations rather than quoting his Japanese colleagues. In 1899, six years after the Parliament, Barrows, given authority on Asian religion through his position as Chairman of the Parliament, and by his subsequent travels in Asia, continued to repeat the message of Saint-Hilaire: "In no religion are we so constantly reminded of our own as in Buddhism, and yet in no religion has man been so far from the truth as in the religion of the Buddha."⁵⁷ His concern was not to know what Buddhism was, but to maintain it as a weapon in his battle against agnosticism, and he would do so by silencing alternative views.

As I read through the letters Suzuki wrote at this time, I cannot help but wonder to what extent such issues instigated and shaped his apprenticeship with Carus. He had already initiated contact and made preliminary plans to study with Carus before the nirvana controversy. Suzuki had written to Carus on March 10, 1895, introducing himself as the translator of *The Gospel of Buddha*, a student of philosophy and an avid reader of *Open Court* and the *Monist*.⁵⁸ Carus had responded with characteristic generosity sending a gift of books including his *Primer of Philosophy*, *Religion of Science*, and seven-bound volumes of his journals. On August 26, Suzuki wrote that he planned to leave Japan

for the United States in November. His departure was repeatedly delayed, most likely for financial reasons. In December 1895, Shaku Sōen wrote commending Suzuki to Carus as a diligent student desiring to study his philosophy, and asking, politely, for his patronage. On January 17, 1896, Carus wrote extending an invitation from himself and his father-in-law, the Chicago industrialist, Edward Hegeler, founder and financial supporter of the Open Court. Less than two months later, on March 10, 1896, we have the letter quoted above that instigated the debate over the meaning of nirvana, followed on March 26, 1896, by a letter from Suzuki thanking Carus and Hegeler for their assistance in allowing him to visit America. Though he would not arrive in San Francisco until February 1897, the arrangements for the journey overlapped with the time of the controversy, and Suzuki, as Shaku Sōen's translator, would have been at the centre of it, reminded of the ignorance of and prejudice toward Mahāyāna in the West, even among Buddhist scholars. The incident brought him into direct contact with the arrogance and power of the Western Buddhist establishment to exclude Asian authority. Though it did not instigate his journey to the West, it may well have focused his determination to create a place of respect and understanding for modern Japanese Mahāyāna. At La Salle, Suzuki would do much more than study Carus's philosophy; he would acquire both the authority to be heard and the means to win sympathy and understanding of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

As we have seen, Carus was a master popularizer. He was not, however, an obvious mentor for a project of attaining academic credibility. Though he is now justly credited with creating widespread acceptance of and interest in Buddhism among Westerners, largely through the popularity of *Gospel*, in spite of his doctorate in philosophy from Tübingen University, he was not accepted as a philosopher or taken seriously as a scholar during his own lifetime. Apart from his lack of affiliation with an American university, academics were scandalized by his editorial independence. He published at will, without any of the formal institutional controls, using the facilities of the Open Court to disseminate monist ideas.⁵⁹ He was his own editor, he had no supervision, his papers were not refereed and did not conform to the rules of any academic discipline. Carus also undermined his academic accreditation in philosophy by choosing to address a popular audience, and by moving between what his peers then saw as the unrelated disciplines of philosophy and oriental studies. *The Gospel of Buddha*, judged by the criteria of orientalist scholarship was, to use Professor Estlin Carpenter's expression, "worthless stuff" since it showed no concern for historical development, used texts from different countries and different periods indiscriminately, ignored differences between sects, and its ultimate failing, it was compiled from secondary materials.⁶⁰ As a record of Buddhism, it was neither philological nor historical, the only acceptable approaches to oriental religion at the time. However, as Carus wrote in response, "I am not quite so ignorant as Professor Carpenter thinks, and possess sufficient scholarly training to distinguish between historically reliable and unreliable accounts."⁶¹ He had,

he admitted, “embodied with good purpose much that a historian would have to reject” but as he explained, “there was method in it”.⁶² Carus, as a Doctor of Philosophy, was, of course, well aware of the difference between what was required to be taken seriously within academic circles and to meet the needs of a general readership, and he chose the latter. *Gospel’s* success was as a popular work, “a very agreeable and instructive book”, widely welcomed among those who appreciated “the freedom of the text from notes or uncouth and outlandish diacritical points”.⁶³

I suggest that Suzuki’s journey might be understood in comparison with the Meiji pioneers referred to earlier who had studied with Max Müller, learning from him the techniques and processes of modern academia. Suzuki, however, followed a different path. Unlike his predecessors, he did not undertake a formal university degree abroad; instead, he sought the skills required to disseminate knowledge of Buddhism in Japan and in the West at a more popular level. Like Carus, Meiji Buddhist revivalists had been keenly aware of the need to reach a non-specialist audience if they were to effect a widespread change of attitude. Who better to study with than Carus, an undisputed master of popularization? Suzuki would also benefit from Carus’s academic training. Carus knew the rules and was well able to direct Suzuki in their use.

Translation: Establishing professional credibility

The first requirement of an academic orientalist is the ability to work with primary sources, and Suzuki began his apprenticeship in this as soon as he arrived at La Salle, working simultaneously on a joint translation with Carus—their book *Lao-Tze’s Tao Teh King* was published in 1898—and his own translation of *Asvaghosha’s Discourse on the Awakening of Faith*, which appeared in 1900. It is clear from this immaculately documented display of erudition that Suzuki had by this time mastered the rules of the scientific study of religion. With this publication and the related scholarly articles in professional journals that appeared while he was at La Salle—his translation of primary sources, his erudite discussions of dating, detailed and documented comparison of various surviving recensions, his demonstrated mastery of both primary and secondary sources—he successfully made the shift from the denigrated position of Buddhist “popular believer” and claimed his authority to contribute to academic discourse on the subject.⁶⁴ The importance of this work in his career could well explain why Suzuki himself would later claim—against the evidence of the correspondence—that he had gone to La Salle to assist Carus with translations of Chinese texts.⁶⁵

Translation requires not just a primary source to work from, but also the language of its presentation, and here too, Suzuki owed much to his mentor. The question is, however, the extent to which he took in Carus’s philosophy as he adopted its vocabulary. While any number of people have commented on Carus’s obvious influence on Suzuki’s early publications,⁶⁶ I am sceptical about

attributing too much admiration of Carus's philosophy to Suzuki. A crucial point too easily overlooked when the analysis begins, as it usually does, with Suzuki's arrival at La Salle, is the important role that Mahāyāna Buddhist ideas had played in enabling Carus to articulate his thought. While there is no doubt that passages in Suzuki's work, even quite crucial ones, sound remarkably like Carus himself, Suzuki's adoption of Carus's vocabulary and style was, I suggest, rather more strategic. A letter he sent to the Japanese journal *Shin Bukkyō* from the United States discussed the problems of transmitting Buddhism to Westerners: "It is not enough just to have a Western education; what is most vital is to understand how the Western [mind] is prepared to receive [Buddhism]."⁶⁷ He specifically mentioned the need to avoid Buddhist terms that were unfamiliar to the audience, and the consequent difficulty in explaining Buddhist principles. How much are Westerners able to understand, he asked, when they have no intellectual preparation? Speaking of his own experiences in California, he observed, "What happens is that, to the audience, Buddhism comes off like some kind of magic show." His concluding question: "are we to take Christian thought and Buddhacize it?" suggests an inversion of Carus's Christianization of Buddhist thought. With his *Gospel of Buddha*, Carus had shown the way to reach a Western audience. Suzuki could follow and push the ideas more firmly toward a Buddhist understanding.

What is clear is that by the end of his apprenticeship, Suzuki had acquired an appropriate philosophical vocabulary and intellectual framework for making Japanese Buddhism acceptable and meaningful to Western audiences. This, when combined with the academic credentials from the books and papers he had published, and the tools of dissemination he had acquired—the skills of editing and publishing—equipped him to establish first the Japanese-language journal *Zendō*,⁶⁸ and later *Eastern Buddhist*. I suggest that Suzuki was less Carus's philosophical disciple, than his apprentice learning the tricks of the trade: the technologies of the dissemination of knowledge.

Eastern Buddhism from La Salle

Suzuki's stay at La Salle was extremely productive. While working on his translation of *Asvaghosha's Discourse* he published book reviews and articles for the *Monist*, *Open Court* and other English language journals as well as contributing to the Japanese journals *Rikugo zasshi* and *Shin Bukkyō*.⁶⁹ *Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot* appeared in 1906. This collection of essays was based on lectures given by Shaku Sōen on his second trip to America in 1905,⁷⁰ but was substantially Suzuki's work, and contained his translation of the *Sutra of the Forty Two Sections*.⁷¹ *Outlines of the Mahāyāna* was published in 1907, the same year as his first English language paper on Zen, "The Zen Sect of Buddhism".

It is not difficult to trace a continuation of the agenda of the Chicago delegation in Suzuki's early writings. The Buddhism they present is the familiar deinstitutionalized, deritualized, philosophical expression of *Shin Bukkyō* as a

universal religion. They reiterate the familiar themes: the Mahāyāna *is* the teaching of the Buddha; Eastern Buddhism is *not* pessimistic or nihilistic; although it is a religion of self-reliance, people are not left unaided; Mahāyāna offers a non-interventionist system of moral retribution, is rational, is compatible with science, and that “philosophical thought in this twentieth century runs parallel to Mahāyāna Buddhism”.⁷² Each work laments Western ignorance and misunderstanding of the Mahāyāna. The trajectory is particularly clear in *Outlines*. It addresses all of the priorities of the delegation, beginning with need for this third discursive space—Eastern Buddhism—to distance the Buddhism of Japan from both Theravāda and the Mahāyāna of China and Tibet.⁷³ There are nevertheless significant differences, new strategies in a changing discursive environment, that contributed to the formation of the well-documented features of popular Western perceptions of Japanese Buddhism, particularly in its reduction to Zen.

Decentering original Buddhism

While equally determined to establish the authenticity of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Suzuki did not repeat the tradition of the *goji*, the five periods of teaching, which, he no doubt realized, fell beyond Western academic criteria of acceptability. He chose instead to challenge the priority of Pāli Buddhism from within the textual parameters of the Western academic paradigm. By publishing his translation of *Asvaghosha's Discourse* (1900) he not only made a principal Mahāyāna text available to Western scholars, but also directly addressed key points of Western rejection of the Mahāyāna. The introductory essay on the dating of Asvaghosha is an exemplary piece of scholarship comparing all the evidence available in Chinese sources on the dating of the lost Sanskrit original. In this context Suzuki established the development and systematization of key Mahāyāna concepts (notably the *Trikāya*, the Three Bodies of the Buddha) several centuries earlier than previously believed, and significantly closer to time of the life of Sakyamuni. This dating enabled him to argue that the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna both emerged out of a period of development soon after the Buddha's death; that they were more or less contemporary, and that the Pāli Buddhism of Theravāda, which, as only one among many schools, had no more claim to originality than Mahāyāna. He repeated this challenge to Theravāda priority in paper published in the *Monist*.⁷⁴

In *Outlines of the Mahāyāna* he took an even bolder step, inverting focus on the older canonical teachings and speaking instead to late nineteenth-century confidence in progress and evolution, of development. “Is Mahāyāna Buddhism the Genuine Teaching of the Buddha?” he asked in the Introduction. Unquestionably yes, but Eastern Buddhism is a living religion, the culmination of thousands of years of development; a living force; not the acorn, but the fully developed oak tree.⁷⁵ In this scheme he presents Hīnayāna as conservative, Mahāyāna as progressive. Both emerged from the same origin, but one tended

to preserve the monastic rules and traditions, the other unfolded the germs in the original system.⁷⁶ Eastern Buddhism is the Buddha's teaching, not in the fundamentalist sense of return to origins, but in the thoughtful development of the meaning of his teachings. It was, following the example of Carus's *Gospel*, "Buddhism up to date".

Decentering the canon

Suzuki's boldest challenge to central Western assumptions appeared in a paper called the "Zen sect of Buddhism" (1906–1907), an article provocatively placed in the *Journal of the Pāli Text Society*, the flagship journal of orientalist Theravāda scholarship edited by T. W. Rhys Davids. Suzuki's name is now so closely associated with Zen that the anomaly of this paper may not be immediately apparent. Zen is, of course, only one school of Buddhism in Japan, and by no means the largest, oldest or most important. Eastern Buddhism was, from the start, deliberately trans-sectarian—the shared essence of Japanese Buddhism in all its modes. Its spokesmen in Chicago represented various schools including the Japanese Tendai (Ch. Tiantai), Pure Land, Shingon and Rinzai Zen. Although Suzuki's personal practice under Shaku Sōen was Rinzai Zen, and he published Japanese articles on Zen quite early, his work in English at this time aimed to promote understanding of Eastern Buddhism. This is the name of his journal which published articles on Japanese Buddhism as a whole. *The Eastern Buddhist*, and the society formed to produce it, aimed to do for Mahāyāna what the *Journal of the Pāli Text Society* had done for Theravāda: disseminate scholarly information about it, win esteem for it. It was not until the late 1930s that the works on Zen for which he is so well known in the West would appear.⁷⁷

The 1907 paper was not widely circulated, and therefore not in itself particularly influential, but it contained the core ideas of popular Zen that would circulate more widely from the mid-twentieth century. It challenged the heart of orientalist scholarship—and T. W. Rhys Davids, founder and editor of the journal, who had made particularly scathing comments about Mahāyāna and its Japanese priests during the controversy—by circumventing the sacred texts and the words of the Buddha entirely. With Zen Suzuki presented an alternative system of legitimation through direct, face-to-face transmission from master to disciple, an unbroken lineage originating with Sakyamuni himself. Zen, the essence of Eastern Buddhism, he argued, is the quintessential teaching of the Buddha, but for Zen, texts are beside the point. A large part of the paper is given over to a detailed history of the transmission of Zen from Sakyamuni onward, patriarch by patriarch, establishing authenticity.⁷⁸

Suzuki's stress on development, together with guarantee of authenticity through the unbroken lineage of direct transmission, decentred the importance of the Founder and his very words that so obsessed Western scholars at the time and was used by them to dismiss Mahāyāna. Under the heading "Principles of Zen" are the subsections "Facts and Not Words" (p. 19) and "No Sūtras, No

Books" (p. 20), titles that specifically signal the project. Zen, he wrote, "does not find any intrinsic importance in the sacred sutras, or their exposition by the wise and learned" (p. 9), but insists "most emphatically" on inner spiritual development. Zen discourages "blind acceptance of an outside authority and a meek submission to conventionality"; Zen teaches life, individuality and inspiration. It gives "perfect freedom to the self-unfolding of the mind within one's self, which was not to be obstructed by any artificial instruments of torture, such as worshipping the Buddha as a saviour, a blind belief in the sacred books, or an unconditioned reliance upon an outside authority" (p. 21). The article nevertheless concludes with a list of traditional texts that may be consulted for further information. Although "it is an avowed enemy of literature" Zen, Suzuki assures the reader, has produced many learned scholars (pp. 42–43). He had in effect repositioned textuality—decentred it—rather than abandon it entirely.

In keeping with his insistence on inner spiritual development, Suzuki's 1907 paper devoted a considerable amount of space to *kōan* practice, in which he delivered the now familiar themes, central to his Zen writing, of the necessity for direct personal experience. The description of *kōan* practice, incomprehensible to an uninitiated reader, very daringly challenged the overarching commitment of the time to rationality, and the fundamental assumption of the Buddhist scholars of the Pāli Text Society, that the Buddha was, as Carus famously put it, "the world's first logical positivist". Since Suzuki wrote the paper while at La Salle, one might wonder how Carus, who was so deeply committed to the rational, responded to Suzuki's ideas of Zen and concepts of *kōan*. Harold Henderson observes that Carus "shows little awareness of the profoundly non-rational element in Zen Buddhism".⁷⁹ This was not a paper designed to win Western approval by catering to its criteria, but one designed to unsettle. It therefore also raises the question of the extent to which Suzuki shared Carus's belief in the value of controversy and debate in encouraging change.

Positive, energetic and practical

In 1907, Suzuki continued to emphasize the active social relevance of Eastern Buddhism. He spoke of Zen's adaptability and appeal to the practical mind; its "simplicity, directness, and efficiency". It flourished in Japan, Suzuki tells us, because "it was introduced at a time noted for its able, military administration."⁸⁰ It appealed not only to "emperors, statesmen and generals... but also men of letters, artists, singers, actors, wrestlers, merchants, masters of tea ceremony, and swordsmen".⁸¹ Zen is practical, active and energetic, "the very antithesis of Oriental 'fatalism.'"⁸² The paper offers sections headed "Not Asceticism", "Zen and General Culture" that again leave little doubt that he was challenging entrenched misunderstanding. The section entitled "Zen Discipline" describes *zazen* and speaks of the benefits of meditation and mental discipline even for non-Buddhists, especially in "these days of industrial and commercial civilization" when many people have little time to devote themselves to spiritual

culture.⁸³ Overall, he portrayed Buddhism in a way that directly appealed to an American desire for a positive, optimistic, active and energetic religion, as well as to those seeking spiritualism, mysticism or insights into Japanese art and culture. And in a gesture that prefigures much twentieth and early twenty-first century practice, he recommended meditation to relieve the stress of modern life.

Zen: The essence of Eastern Buddhism

By focussing on Zen, the 1907 paper quite forcefully distanced Eastern Buddhism from other forms of Mahāyāna. Suzuki argued that although it is the result of twenty centuries of development of the Buddha's idea, Zen is unique within Eastern Buddhism, as it is the one sect that is peculiarly suited to the Far Eastern mind. While other forms of the Mahāyāna—he listed specifically “the T'ien Tai, Avatamsaka, the Mādhyamika, or the Yoga”, each of which is present in Japan—reflect the “elaborately speculative genius of the Hindus”,⁸⁴ Zen offers a simple and practical spirituality, suited to the practical East-Asian mind in general, and especially to the Japanese.⁸⁵ Here we see that Suzuki has supplanted the racial hierarchy implied in the argument of the Five Periods of the Buddha's teaching (*goji*) with the more fashionable concept of that each race produces a religion in keeping with its individual genius. While the strategy may have won space for Eastern Buddhism, it had the unfortunate consequence of marginalizing many very important schools of living Japanese tradition, particularly the ritualistic schools of Tendai and Shingon, which were, by implication, “non-Japanese”.

The argument of East-Asian particularity based on Zen's simplicity, practicality and flexibility, was also the seed of its universality. The creation of Chinese Chan Buddhism from Indian *dhyāna* showed the ease with which Buddhism accommodated Confucianism first and then Taoism. Its further transformation to Japanese Zen—the adaptation of Chan to Japanese society—was evidence of its flexibility, and its ability to adapt. In Suzuki's 1907 essay, he argued that Zen is both uniquely Japanese and also a trans-religious, universal spirituality and the essence of Buddhism. In a continuity with the Chicago position, he argued that it is uniquely Japanese and hence a source of national pride, but of universal applicability, and therefore available to be Japan's contribution to the world. The delegation to Chicago had repackaged *Shin Bukkyō* as Eastern Buddhism and offered it as the universal religion of the future; Suzuki—after an apprenticeship with Carus and a decade of engagement with the Western discourse—made the further transition from Eastern Buddhism to Zen. Though his ideas did not circulate widely at this time, the core concepts which would later attain popular currency, were articulated in this early paper, written while he was at La Salle. They appear again much later in Suzuki's extremely influential book, *Zen and Japanese Culture* (1938), but this belongs to later times, and other stages of Japan's relations with Asia and the West.⁸⁶ In *Eastern Buddhist* (1921) we see the more cautious statement that it is Buddhism in general

that is the basis of the arts in Japan, the basis of Japanese intellectuality. The anomaly of the publication at this stage of Suzuki's career reveals its strategic intent.

Orientalism, Occidentalism and modern Buddhism

The story of the formation of Western Zen from Suzuki's writings on Eastern Buddhism has been covered by others. I refer you to Sharf's "Zen of Japanese Nationalism" for an account of the impact of Suzuki's Zen in the West⁸⁷; to Richard King on the appeal of Suzuki's Zen for Westerners searching for the "perennial philosophy";⁸⁸ to Sharf again, and my earlier work, for its entanglement with the emerging discourse on *bushidō* (the way of the warrior) that would eventually manifest in the popular association of Zen with warrior culture and Japanese art. I did not set out to analyse Suzuki's complete opus, but to show through examples of his early work the extent to which his engagement with Western dominance shaped what he wrote and published; the various ways, positive and negative, that the East–West encounter cast Eastern Buddhism.

The formation of Eastern Buddhism shows that the impact of nineteenth-century Western dominance was not confined to its colonial possessions, and was not always a force of oppression. The West (Japan's encompassing fusion of Europe and America) played a number of roles in Meiji Japan and in the formation of modern Japanese Buddhism. Most obviously, it was a source of inspiration, a model of how to be modern and a source of information on institutional structures. We see this function in the decision of Buddhist institutions to send priests to Oxford. The prestige of the West in the minds of those who wished to become modern, was usefully deployed in the Japanese translation and publication of Paul Carus's *The Gospel of Buddha*. We might describe the process as "strategic Occidentalism"⁸⁹ a term that succinctly encapsulates the significance of the events in domestic Japanese nationalist discourse. In the narrative of the formation and publication of Eastern Buddhism, however, it might more usefully be seen as "oriental participation in Orientalism", a perspective that focuses the importance of orientalist scholarship in shaping the discourse the Japanese were obliged to engage in, and which reflects the consequences of these strategies of domestic Japanese discourse for Western knowledge of Buddhism.

The tension between the terms reflects the discursive environment of the late nineteenth century. In earlier periods of Western writings on Asia, the West was able to present images in isolation from their purported object—how many Chinese read Voltaire's writings on China, much less attempted to contest them?—but by this time it was increasingly difficult. Asian elites spoke and read European languages, and the imperatives of Asian modernity drew them to look closely at intellectual developments in the West, particularly those that concerned them personally. The situation, therefore, was very much more complex and interactive. What the West said of Japan was of vital concern in its project

of becoming modern, and as the presentation of Eastern Buddhism shows, they were not content to be spoken for, but actively intervened in Western discourses.

Reflecting on comments Suzuki made in 1958, Robert Sharf observed that “one is led to suspect that Suzuki’s lifelong effort to bring Buddhist enlightenment to the Occident had become inextricably bound to a studied contempt for the West, a West whose own cultural arrogance and imperialist inclinations Suzuki had come to know all too well.”⁹⁰ I see Suzuki’s reactions against Western arrogance and imperialism right at the start of his career, brought home to him very sharply even as he corresponded with Carus about his journey to America, by the nirvana controversy, an exchange that also demonstrated very clearly that the rules of Western discourse placed Western philological authority based on Pāli texts above that of a Japanese abbot, even one acknowledged in his own country as a leading Buddhist scholar. To be taken seriously, he would need to take on this authority. To take on the West, he would need to play by its rules.

While the silencing of Asian voices that Said identified in his classic work on Western discourses on the Orient was very real, it was not a consequence of ethnicity or colonial domination. As the Japanese priests who studied at Oxford had shown, Asians could attain the right to speak with academic authority by undergoing training and accreditation within Western academic institutions, by learning and following the rules that determined what was, and was not, acceptable. Suzuki would eventually obtain a doctorate with a thesis on the *Lankavatāra sūtra* at Otani University in 1925, but in 1895 he chose instead to take the opportunity to study with Carus. At the Open Court he was in touch with new intellectual movements in the West, apprentice to a master popularizer, one who had already achieved some success in making Buddhism appealing to the educated general readership that Suzuki himself aimed to address. He quickly learnt how to convey difficult ideas to a non-specialist audience, to abide by the rules of scholarship, accommodate academic expectations, and, thanks to Carus’s editorial generosity, to reap great advantage from ready access to the Open Court Press. At La Salle, Suzuki gained the authority to speak and be taken seriously, and was thereby able to create a space of respectability in Anglophone scholarship for Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Notes

1. D. T. Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963. First published London: Luzac, 1907), 4.
2. This paper revisits material from my book *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003) to focus more particularly on the East–West interactions and Japanese agency that shaped D. T. Suzuki’s work. The Buddhism of Meiji revival is discussed there.
3. These terms were current in the colonial nineteenth century and reflect the geographical spread of Buddhism at that time. Theravāda is the dominant practice of

- Ceylon, Siam, Burma, Cambodia and Laos, the countries of the southern regions of Asia, while Mahāyāna is the Buddhism of in Nepal and Tibet. The terms are problematic, however, because they conceal the historical existence—and even coexistence—of both Theravāda and Mahāyāna throughout Asia at various times.
4. Charles Hallisey, “Roads not Taken in the Study of Theravāda Buddhism.” In Donald Lopez, ed. *Curators of the Buddha* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 31–61, writes of T. W. Rhys Davids, as the “inaugural hero” of Theravāda scholarship. The term comes from Edward Said’s classic work, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1978), 122.
 5. James E. Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West*, Chs. 5 and 6.
 6. Shimoda Masahiro, “The Significance of the Publication of the Taisho Tripitaka in Modern Buddhist Studies”; Silvio Vita, “Buddhist Scholarship and the Production of the Buddhist Canon in Modern Japan” papers presented at the ASA conference, Washington, 2002. Silvio Vita, “Printings of the Buddhist ‘Canon’ in Modern Japan.” In Giovanni Veradi and Silvio Vita, eds, *Buddhist Asia 1*, Papers from the First Conference of Buddhist Studies held in Naples in May 2001 (Kyoto: Italian School of East Asian Studies), 219–245.
 7. On “Buddhist Bibles”, collections of key texts presented in modern Japanese rather than the specialist Buddhist-Sanskrit hybrid, see Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs*, 207–212.
 8. Nanjō Bunyū’s most important English work from this period was *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka. The Sacred Canon of the Buddhists of China and Japan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1883). He also compiled and edited one of the early “Buddhist bibles”, *Bukkyō Seiten* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1905). Takakusu Junjirō, “The Amitāyur-Dhyāna-Sūtra.” In F. M. Muller, ed. *Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts. Sacred Books of the East*, vol. XLIX (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), 159–201; Takakusu Junjirō, *I-Tsing: A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (AD 671–695)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896); Takakusu Junjirō, “Buddhism as We Find it in Japan.” *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society of London*, 7 (1905–1907): 264–270.
 9. Suzuki, “Doku Shinbukkyō dainikan dainigo” (On Reading Volume 1, Number 2 of New Buddhism) SDZ 30: 259–262. Originally published in *Shin Bukkyō*, 2–4 (April 1901): 182–185.
 10. Inoue Enryō, *Nihonjin*, 1 (April 1888).
 11. The term “Hīnayāna” (Japanese *shōjō*) literally “small vehicle”, used here by Inoue, is a generic term for schools of Buddhism based on the Pāli canon, of which Theravāda, literally “the way of the elders”, is one remaining tradition. It is now considered a derogatory reference to Theravāda, and indeed, Inoue may have intended it this way. It is important to acknowledge the distinction, however, because Suzuki would use the more encompassing definition to challenge Theravāda priority.
 12. “Bankoku shūkyō daikaigi ni tsuite kakushū kyōkai ni nozomu” (A Request to the All Sects Council Concerning the World’s Parliament of Religions), *Shūkyō*, April 5, 1893, 297.
 13. *Ibid.*, 299.
 14. Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West*, Ch. 9.
 15. T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism: A Sketch of the Life and Teachings of Gautama, The Buddha* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1878);

- T. W. Rhys Davids, *The Hibbert Lectures* (London: Green and Sons, 1881). See Judith Snodgrass, "Defining Modern Buddhism: Mr and Mrs Davids and the Pāli Text Society." *CSSAAME*, 27:1 (2007): 186–202.
16. Edwin Arnold, *The Light of Asia* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1879).
 17. Snodgrass, "Defining Modern Buddhism."
 18. See Roger-Pol Droit, *The Cult of Nothingness: The Philosophers and the Buddha*, David Streight and Pamela Vohnson, trans. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), for a recent account of Buddhism in nineteenth-century European thought.
 19. T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, 207; cf. *Hibbert Lectures*, 32. It was an enduring position.
 20. J. Barthelémy Saint-Hilaire, *The Buddha and His Religion* (Bracken Books: London, 1996), 15. First edition 1860.
 21. *Ibid.*, 14.
 22. *Ibid.*, 13.
 23. James D'Alwis in a review of Max Müller's *Dhammapada*, 1870, quoted in Guy Richard Welbon, *The Buddhist Nirvana and its Western Interpreters* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 133. Emphasis added. Cf. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, 7. Droit, *The Cult of Nothingness*, analyses the Western image of Buddhism as a religion of annihilation.
 24. The five periods in Japanese are *kegonji* (*Avatamsaka* period), *agonji* (*Āgama* period), *hōdōji* (*Vaipulya* period), *hannyaji* (*Prajñā* period), and *hokke-nehaji* (*Saddharma-pundarika* and *nirvana* period). Cf. *Japanese English Buddhist Dictionary* (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1965), 81 (henceforth JEBD).
 25. Toki introduced this term in his paper, "Buddhism in Japan." In John Henry Barrows, ed., *The World's Parliament of Religions* (Chicago: Parliament Publishing, 1893): 543–552.
 26. Rev. Hikadue Sumangala, "Buddhism: Southern Orthodox." In Barrows, ed., *World's Parliament of Religions*, 894.
 27. Ashitsu Jitsuzen, "Buddha." In Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions*, 1038–1040. The paper is also available in W. R. Houghton, ed., *Neely's History of the Parliament of Religions* (Chicago: F. Tennyson Neely, 1894) 537–543. While Barrows is the "official" record of the proceedings, the latter presents a less brutally edited version of Ashitsu Jitsuzen's paper. It is not only much longer, but has retained Buddhist technical terms in Japanese, Sanskrit and Chinese from which it is possible to perceive the argument. Among his pre-Chicago works is Ashitsu Jitsuzen, *Nihon shūkyō mirai ki* (Kyoto: Tendai Shūmusho, 1889). The following paragraph uses Ashitsu's English expressions.
 28. Ashitsu, "Buddha." In Houghton, ed., *Neely's History*, 538.
 29. It is apparent from Barrows's editing that he, at least, did not follow the argument.
 30. Shaku Soen, "The Law of Cause and Effect as Taught by the Buddha." In Barrows, ed., *World's Parliament of Religions*, 829–831.
 31. *Ibid.*
 32. Kuroda Shintō, *Outlines of the Mahāyāna as Taught by Buddha* (Tokyo: Bukkyō gakkuwai, 1893), 16–19. This small book had been distributed among Japanese experts and approved for distribution at the Parliament and represents the clearest statement of the delegation's project.
 33. Shintō, *Outlines of the Mahāyāna*, 16.
 34. T. W. Harris, "Proofs of the Existence of God." In Barrows, ed., *The World's Parliament of Religions*, 306–314. This quote, 306.

35. Welbon, *Buddhist Nirvana*; Droit, *Cult of Nothingness*.
36. Shintō, *Outlines of the Mahāyāna*.
37. This is from Ashitsu's paper as published in *Neely's History*, following standard spellings in the JEBD, 298.
38. Toki, "Buddhism in Japan," 459.
39. Harold Henderson, *Catalyst for Controversy: Paul Carus of Open Court* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 91.
40. Paul Carus, "The Religion of Resignation", *Open Court*, 3: 48 (January 1890) 2051–2052; "Entry into Nirvana", *Open Court*, 4: 43 (December 1890): 2635–2636.
41. Paul Carus, "Karma and Nirvana: Are the Buddhist Doctrines Nihilistic?" *Monist*, 4:3 (April 1894): 417–439. The parliament opened in September 1893.
42. See, for example, Carus, "Religion of Science," *Monist*, 3 (April 1893): 352–361, where he offered a vague description of his conception of God, one that attempted to retain an omnipotence and omnipresence, and God as source of moral authority, while denying any sense of anthropotheism, or anything else that defied the laws of science. His God was defined by what it was not, and therefore was seen by orthodox Christians as atheistic (359–360). His post-parliament writings, by contrast, are more precise and offer a god that is very much like the *dharmakāya*.
43. Thomas Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism 1844–1912* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992).
44. Martin Verhoven, "Americanising the Buddha: Paul Carus and the Transformation of Asian Thought." In Charles S. Prebish and Kenneth K. Tanaka eds, *The Faces of Buddhism in America* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1998), 207–227. This quote, 207.
45. See Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West*, Ch. 10, "Paul Carus: Buddhism and Monist Mission."
46. Carus, *Gospel*, Preface, xi.
47. It is instructive to compare the two sets of illustrations in the 2004 edition of *The Gospel of Buddha*. The two artists, Olga Kopetsky and Yamada Keichu, obviously respond to the same brief.
48. *Monist*, 6: 1(October 1895): 142.
49. I have discussed Carus's masterful manipulation of the text elsewhere. See Judith Snodgrass, "Budda no Fukuin: The Deployment of Paul Carus's Gospel of Buddha in Meiji Japan", *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 25: 3–4 (Fall 1998): 319–344. There is very little correspondence between the references and the text, and some of the abbreviations in the table do not refer to the canon. "E. A." for example indicates Carus's own "Explanatory Additions".
50. D. T. Suzuki, trans. *Budda no Fukuin* (Tokyo, January 1895). Second edition, 1901, is reprinted in *Suzuki Daisetsu Zenshū* (The complete works of Suzuki Daisetsu, henceforth SDZ) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), vol. 25. This quote, 507.
51. Shaku Sōen, "Preface" to *Budda no Fukuin*.
52. Suzuki, "Translator's Preface", *Budda no Fukuin* (1901), 281.
53. "A Controversy on Buddhism," *Open Court*, 11 (January 1897): 43–58. Henderson, *Catalyst for Controversy*, adds the interesting information that Carus went into some trouble to extract Ellinwood's response, even offering a fee. I assume he did so to create an opportunity for publicity and public discussion, since the controversy coincided with the publication of Carus's book *Buddhism and its Christian Critics* (La Salle: Open Court Press, 1897).
54. My thanks to Wayne Yokoyama, a member of the editing team of recent volumes of the SDZ, for bringing this letter to my attention. It is dated March 1, 1896.

- Shaku Sōen's reply is reproduced in *Zen for Americans*. I have recently become aware that Henderson's *Catalyst for Controversy* quotes this letter.
55. In fairness to Ellinwood, Carus's authorship of the letter and his desire to show parallels between Buddhism and Christianity may have given it a push in this direction.
 56. T. W. Rhys Davids, *American Lectures*, 208, quoted by F. F. Ellinwood, in his contribution to "A Controversy on Buddhism", 50, emphasis added.
 57. John Henry Barrows, *The Christian Conquest of Asia* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 179.
 58. Suzuki's letters 1888–1937 are now available in Kirita Kiyohide ed., *Letters 1888–1937*, SDZ, 37 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2003). This letter, 55.
 59. Henderson documents a horrendous record of Hegeler's interference in controlling the content of the journal to this end, and his approval of Carus's zeal in the project.
 60. J. Estlin Carpenter, quoted in Paul Carus, "Scholarmania", *Open Court*, 9 (March 21, 1895): 4435–4436.
 61. *Ibid.*, 4436.
 62. *Ibid.*
 63. Both quotes are from an insert between pages 4546 and 4547 in *Open Court*, 9 (1895) offering a collection of reviews and comments on *Gospel*.
 64. Two other co-translated Taoist texts appeared in 1906 and there were papers in a number of other journals, *Monist*, *Open Court*, *Museon*, *Journal of the Buddhist Text Society*, *Light of Dharma*.
 65. Henderson first pointed to the discrepancy between the evidence of the letters and Suzuki's recollection in his essay, Suzuki, "Introduction: A Glimpse of Paul Carus." Sharf and Verhoeven use the discrepancy to bolster their argument that Suzuki went to Carus to study his philosophy and to emphasize Carus's impact on his work.
 66. Carus, Publisher's Preface to D. T. Suzuki, *Asvaghosha's Discourse on the Awakening of Faith* (Chicago: Open Court, 1900), iv.
 67. D. T. Suzuki, "Obei no okeru no bukyō no zento." SDZ, 17: 70–79, Wayne Yokoyama (trans.). Originally published in *Shin Bukkyō*, 10: 8 (1909): 765–773.
 68. Suzuki edited *Zendō* with Shaku Sōen from 1910, soon after his return to Japan. The English language journal, *Eastern Buddhist*, began in 1921. Sharf and others have commented on its similarity to Carus's journals.
 69. Kirita Kiyohide, "D. T. Suzuki and the State," 55. Works in Japanese from this period include "Zen to Rinri (Zen and ethics)," 1897, SDZ, 31: 53–56; "Zakkan roku" (Random Thoughts) 1898, SDZ, 31: 64–70; "Seiza to susume" (Encouragement of sitting still), 1889, SDZ, 18: 391–404; "Sammai" toiu koto ni tsukite" (Regarding samādhi), 1899, SDZ, 31: 75–77; "Bukkyō no hirosa" (The Breadth of Buddhism), 1900, SDZ, 31: 75–77; "Zen to Rinri" (Zen and Ethics), 1900, SDZ, 31: 75–77.
 70. The tour was financed by wealthy Americans, Alexander and Ida Russell. See Shaku Sōen, "Reflections on an American Journey." Translated by Wayne S. Yokoyama, *Eastern Buddhist*, 26: 2 (Autumn 1993): 138–148.
 71. Suzuki, "Translator's Preface", *Zen for Americans* (Chicago: Open Court, 1974), iv. This is a retitled version of Shaku Sōen, *Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot*. Trans. D. T. Suzuki (Chicago: Open Court, 1906).
 72. Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, xiii.

73. In a further continuity of the Chicago mission, he offered this book to Shaku Sōen with the wish that it might be of help in Japan, an alternative perhaps to *Budda no Fukuin* as an easy reader for Western educated Japanese.
74. Suzuki, "Asvaghosha, the First Advocate of the Mahāyāna Buddhism." *Monist*, 10: 2 (January 1900): 216–245.
75. Suzuki, *Outlines of the Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 6.
76. Ibid., 3–4. See also D. T. Suzuki, "The First Buddhist Council," 1904 where he goes back to the earliest texts to establish that there were different interpretations of the Buddha's words at his death and therefore even when he lived; there was a large body of opinion alongside the Theravāda.
77. Most of the books on Zen were compilations of articles and lectures. *Zen and Its Influence on Japanese Culture* (Kyoto: Eastern Buddhist Society, 1938) was originally put together from lectures given in the United States and Britain in 1936. His extensive writings on Pure Land Buddhism remain largely overlooked.
78. Suzuki, "Zen Sect of Buddhism," 9–18.
79. Henderson, *Catalyst for Controversy*, 105.
80. Suzuki, "Zen Sect of Buddhism," 33. This would become the basis of the lectures on Zen and Japanese culture.
81. Ibid., 34. The article appeared about the same time as Okakura Kakuzō's English language account of the Zen aesthetics of samurai culture, *The Book of Tea* (1906), and the enthusiasm for *bushidō* in the early years of the twentieth century following Japan's military successes in Korea (1894), China (1900), and Russia (1906).
82. Suzuki, "Zen Sect of Buddhism", 34.
83. Ibid., 38. This section offered extracts from *Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot*.
84. Suzuki, "Zen Sect of Buddhism", 32.
85. Compare this with the 1917 version: The Mahāyāna sects other than Zen "bespeak their Indian origin in an unmistakable manner". No Chinese or Japanese mind could have conceived of the complex rituals of the Shingon, or the highly speculative philosophy of the Tendai and Kegon, he continued.
86. *Zen and Its Influence on Japanese Culture*, 1936, was published in Japanese as *Zen to nihon bunka* in 1940, revised and issued in America in 1949 as *Zen and Japanese Culture*, which remains a standard reference. The work circulated through Japan's invasion of mainland Asia, the war in the Pacific, the post-war flush of American appreciation of Japanese culture, the Zen boom of the 1960s and 1970s, its influence multiplied by the reliance on it of Western authors.
87. Robert H. Sharf, "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism." *History of Religions*, 33: 1 (1993): 1–43.
88. Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Post Colonial Theory, India and the "Mystic East"* (London: Routledge, 1999).
89. Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs*.
90. Sharf, "Zen of Japanese Nationalism", 29.

Part II

Mission and Meaning in Christianity

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4

The Education of Annie Howe: Missionary Transformations in late Meiji Japan

Roberta Wollons

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the international missionary enterprise evolving in America made a dramatic, if not absolute, shift from an emphasis on religious conversion to an emphasis on introducing Christianity through education. In the formative decades of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (hereafter ABCFM), 1810–1860, the largest and most well organized of the foreign mission societies, its main architect, Rufus Anderson (1796–1880) articulated a philosophy of indigenization of Christianity through evangelism and respect for local culture. His vision for the indigenous church was embodied in his mantra of the three selfs: self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating.¹ The vision behind this was the propagation of indigenous Christianity that would take root in the form of a religion that was Christian in theology but local in culture. Anderson believed in the fundamental appeal of Christianity as a belief system and means to salvation, and he also believed that the propagation of Christianity had to come from planting local churches and allowing them to grow in their own ways. The job of the missionary was to bring the message of Christianity, the possibility of salvation, and the goodness of Jesus Christ. Beyond that, the missionary was to respect local culture, become fluent in the indigenous language, and when a local Christian church had taken root that could manage itself, the missionary could move on. Young churches were to be local from the outset, not colonial outposts of Western churches, nor copies of them. With notable foresight, Anderson recognized the dangers of using religion as a tool of colonization and coercive acculturation.

In the ABCFM's formative years, men were designated as missionaries, and women traveled as wives and daughters, but without the ministerial authority for evangelism. Incrementally, the need emerged for women to better advance the conversion of indigenous women who often, by custom, could not be approached by men. Moreover, as true conversion to Christianity required the ability to read the bible, literacy was an essential tool of evangelism. Not all missionary wives were teachers, however, nor did they have the time to divert from the cares of child rearing, making a home, and tending to the needs of

the community. By mid century, the call to allow single-American women to become missionary teachers became great among both men and women in the mission fields, and among the growing class of educated women at home.

The unintended consequence of shifting from an emphasis on creating an indigenous church to evangelism through education was nothing less than an abandonment of Anderson's vision of the indigenous church. Indeed, the expansion of women's education and political rights in America, the increasing emphasis on education within the international missionary movement, and the autonomy women derived from the formation of Women's Boards,² all were considered to be progressive and advantageous to women. Nevertheless, in the missionary fields abroad, these changes resulted in widening the distance between the missionary women and their indigenous counterparts. Where missionary wives had been there to assist in the creation of a local church, the new generation of teachers manifested an increasingly hierarchical and imperial relationship to their indigenous flock.

This shift from the creation of the indigenous church to control through education and "civilization," led to tensions over power and control in the schools and churches abroad. The story of Annie Lyon Howe, a missionary educator who went to Japan in 1887, after the formation of the Women's Boards of the ABCFM (in 1868), illustrates the shift in policy after Anderson. The desire to recreate a western-style education for women along with the western style of Christian liberalism and individualism were incompatible with the creation of an indigenous church, operated by local converts, shaped by the norms of the local culture. Howe would feel it as a loss when she was forced to cede control of her school to Japanese teachers, rather than as a success, as Anderson would have had it.

The paths chosen by the extraordinary women missionaries of this era were untrodden, demanding, and, far different from their opportunities at home, what they built abroad would be the product of their own invention. They relied on their education and training, their independence, and their idealistic vision for what Christianity and education could mean to the unenlightened. In the end, they brought their western experiences and convictions regarding how a society should be organized, and largely felt that what they were offering was better than what they found. Nevertheless, over the course of years, most missionaries compromised, adapted, and transformed themselves and their institutions, within the limits of their individual abilities to change. Some changed more than others, but none remained unaffected by the power of the local culture to alter their plans.

The mission

The religious revival that took place in the United States in the early nineteenth century gave rise to a missionary crusade to spread the gospel throughout the world. In the early years of America's Second Great Awakening (1800–1830), an

evangelistic movement arose in response to a perceived decline in religious uniformity and troubling inequities in the new republic.³ The revival was linked to other antebellum reform movements, including abolitionism, women's rights, and temperance, and spread to college campuses inspiring four students at Andover Theological Seminary to petition the state of Massachusetts to form a society solely to support foreign missions.⁴ Deeply committed to the idea, the students formed the fledgling but lofty ABCFM in 1810.⁵ While the founders were Congregationalist, the ABCFM did not have a specific denominational agenda. They were emboldened, rather by three religious-intellectual ideas: the biblical injunction to "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15);⁶ the conviction that America had a special and disproportionately large role in God's saving plan for humankind; and lastly the vivid and horrible images of millions of heathen perishing yearly without being brought to Christ.⁷ The idea took hold with surprising rapidity, and the ABCFM sent the first missionaries to Ceylon (the former Sri Lanka) in 1813.⁸

The main architect and theoretician of the missionary movement in the United States was indisputably Rufus Anderson, the Foreign Secretary for the ABCFM from 1826 to 1866. Anderson's central agenda was to evangelize, but not to "civilize" the heathen. Anderson had observed the way in which Native Americans in the west had been treated by missionaries, under the widely held belief that evangelizing non-western people inevitably brought with it the desire for western civilization, and, conversely, emphasizing civilization produced understanding and acceptance of the gospel. In practice, civilization was emphasized, especially through the schools. Anderson believed that these assumptions were not only untrue, but undesirable. In his view, it was a grave mistake to make the transformation of civilization the aim of the mission.⁹ Missionaries, he observed, "erroneously expect the piety of new converts to be manifested in the forms familiar in England and New England, and the propagation of the faith is regarded as the creation among heathen tribes and nations of a highly improved society such as we ourselves enjoy".¹⁰ While that transformation took ages to achieve in the west, he feared that missionaries would expect it to occur almost simultaneously with the conversion of a small group of neophytes. Alternatively, referring to the experiences of the apostles as they began to evangelize, he instructed the missionaries to lay the groundwork for the cultivation of indigenous churches. In keeping with this principle, missionaries studied the local language for as long as two years before beginning work with indigenous people no matter where in the world. Moreover, education of the local converts was limited to the degree necessary to read the bible. In many locations, translations of the bible into local languages became the enduring work of missionaries.

At the foundation of Anderson's ideas was a belief in the universality and redemptive power of Christianity, without equating it to "civilization", or western culture. The directive to missionaries to go out and cultivate indigenous

churches assumed that Christianity itself existed outside any one culture. The problem for missionaries was how to recognize an indigenized Christianity. What outward manifestations would give clues to inner conversion? This policy, however central to the ABCFM's intentions, faltered as missionaries were unable to fully trust the indigenous Christian converts to control their own churches.

In addition to the difficulty of discerning the moment that an indigenous church could be left to its own control, other consequences flowed from Anderson's vision. For women, Anderson held to the position that only men could be ministers and therefore do the work of evangelism. Women were in the mission field as wives and mothers, responsible for many of the duties that would befall the wife of a minister at home. This sufficed as long as missionaries did not pursue a larger educational goal. Grounded in his strong desire to create indigenous Christianity throughout the world, he shied away from establishing schools that taught a western liberal education, which he thought would colonize rather than liberate the fledgling Christians.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century, Anderson's position was challenged by several important, inexorable changes in American society. In the United States, the increase in education for women, the growth of urban centers, and the ideas of the emerging Social Gospel movement, all redirected the efforts of Protestant churches toward greater social amelioration.¹¹ In the United States, the urban population in the years between 1870 and 1890 increased from 1/5 to 1/3, concurrently with a rise in immigrants, who received blame for many of the social problems of urbanization and industrialization. They were accused of loose moral standards, unsanitary conditions in the slums, labor troubles, and for illegally swaying municipal politics.¹² Anti-immigrant, but largely anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish views cemented already fermenting convictions regarding the superiority of Anglo-American culture. Missionary expansionists used Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The White Man's Burden" to represent altruistic imperialism, and Walter Rauschenbusch claimed, "The kingdom of God is still a collective conception, involving the whole social life of man... It's not a matter of getting individuals to heaven, but of transforming the life on earth into the harmony of heaven."¹³ Social Gospel theology proposed that an individual was saved in a social context rather than outside of it.

These changes fueled not only the ambitions of social settlement workers and other urban reformers, but the missionary movement as well. Social Gospel proponent Horace Bushnell (1802–1876) attempted to reorient American impulse for faith and charity to an industrial society with its new urban, industrial-based and scientific environments.¹⁴ Bushnell was instrumental in moving the theological focus from the individual to the collective by considering individuals as organic parts of society and the family. He promoted the idea of Christian "nurture" rather than abrupt conversion as the means by which people become Christian, and opened the way for a liberal theological emphasis on God dwelling within humanity. This liberal theology carried over to influence new concepts of missions embraced by the second Foreign Corresponding Secretary of the ABCFM and many missionaries coming of age in that reform generation.

Secretary Nathaniel G. Clark followed Rufus Anderson as Foreign Secretary of the ABCFM (1866–1894). Clark’s ascendance to the position provided the opportunity for change within the ABCFM, not only for women, but broadly for the direction of the organization. Elements of the Social Gospel theory influenced theological assumptions about an individual’s relation to society, reflected in the rhetoric of the post-Anderson missionary agenda. The subjects of this study came to the ABCFM as a consequence of Rufus Anderson’s retirement, and the ascendance of Clark and his generation of missionaries who would abrogate the distinction Anderson had so scrupulously established between social reform and religious conversion.

The missionaries

A critical and complementary factor in the evolution of the nineteenth-century missionary enterprise came through the advancement in higher education for women. Inspired by the New England revivals, educator Mary Lyon (1797–1849) built upon emerging ideas for women’s education,¹⁵ and, in 1831 she began formulating the Mount Holyoke model for the education of women.¹⁶ Along with a classical curriculum, Lyon encouraged charitable service as defined by the emerging concerns for both piety and benevolence. Blending a newly formulating service-oriented Christianity with a liberal arts curriculum opened up a public space and an institutional framework for a pioneering generation of educated women.¹⁷ “Christian self sacrifice”, as historian Amanda Porterfield notes, “was one arena in which American women in the nineteenth century could compete with men . . .”¹⁸ Thus linking higher education to Christian service opened the way for public support of women’s higher education.

Missionary work not only celebrated self-sacrifice, it also allowed for self-expression and social activism. As the aggressive evangelical movement swept through the colleges and universities, it attracted the young and talented women of Mount Holyoke as it had the men of Andover. Once enthused by the idea of missionary work, Mary Lyon loyally supported the American Board. She brought to campus Dr Rufus Anderson, the Board’s energetic foreign secretary, and Fidelity Fiske (1816–1864), the legendary missionary to Persia, who enthralled Mount Holyoke students with their stories of exotic adventure and the extraordinary opportunity to bring salvation to the heathen.¹⁹ Each year, a stream of missionaries on furlough came through Mount Holyoke and other women’s colleges and seminaries to talk about their experiences in Japan, Africa, India, and Asia Minor (Turkey) and to recruit new missionaries. During the period from 1837 to 1888, prior to its affiliation with the Women’s Board, a total of 178 Mount Holyoke graduates enlisted in the foreign missions, a considerable percentage of the school’s alumnae.²⁰

From the beginning, in the spirit of the demands for the abolition of slavery and civil rights for women, the ABCFM had considered the spiritual needs of women to be on a par with those of men. Rufus Anderson recognized the

influence of mothers on their children, and ennobled the importance of women's moral influence in the home. According to the prevailing gender norms, men and women were by nature suited to work in distinct arenas of life, and women's social responsibility was to create a home that was a refuge from the morally unsavory world of the marketplace. Like its causes, the effects of this discourse were manifold. The idea of separate spheres lent force to the idea that woman's moral influence could be extended beyond the literal home to a world badly in need of such influence. The foreign missionary movement embodied a particularly assertive interpretation of the ideology of separate spheres, involving a conceptualization of women's role as moral guardian to the world.

While Western women were involved with the missionary endeavors from the eighteenth century, their independent agency in the mission field did not fully begin until 1868 with the formation of the Women's Boards. Before this time, the primary way for a woman with a strong sense of evangelical duty to enter the overseas missionary field was to marry a seminary graduate bound for foreign lands. Other women accompanied their male relatives overseas as the daughters or sisters, later finding husbands among the ranks of the missionaries. The wives of missionaries were, generally, as committed to the evangelical project as their husbands, and often as well educated.²¹ In their capacity as wives, they were to exhibit to the surrounding population the virtues of companionate marriage and an open, well-ordered Christian home. In addition, missionary wives frequently established home schools for girls and "visited" where possible, in the model of the New England pastor's wife. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, overextended missionary wives themselves urged the missionary boards to recruit single women as teachers to support the girls' schools. Local custom in many of the Asian fields prevented male missionaries from reaching women directly, adding pressure from the men to recruit single women, particularly those trained as teachers.

Following the American Civil War (1861–1865), several factors gave rise to a shift in American Board policies toward single women traveling alone as missionaries. Before the Civil War Rufus Anderson had held firmly to the belief that women's work was ancillary to the work of men, and that single women should not travel alone. His view of education, to be conducted in the vernacular, was for the ultimate goal of conversion and fulfillment of his triptych: self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation of indigenous churches. His desire to create indigenous churches had made him mistrustful of education as a tool of missionary labor. Nevertheless, his abiding belief in creating a culturally local church abroad appeared more and more out of sync with trends at home. His fear of putting too much emphasis on education had the effect of marginalizing the very sphere which was increasingly the purview of American women at home. With considerable confidence, by mid-century missionary wives in collaboration with a newly educated cohort of women were asserting their belief in a liberal education, and the need for single women without family obligations to devote their full energies in the missionary fields. Moreover, as

historian Dana Robert observed, in the aftermath of the Civil War, the death of the largest number of men in American history created an entire generation of single women who had benefited from antebellum women's education, and were resigned to reduced prospects for a traditional family life.²² The educated women of this pioneering cohort were eager for a way to use their extraordinary education and training, committed to the lessons of service they had so willingly absorbed, and prepared to rely on themselves in ways their mothers would not have been. Whether as foreign missionaries, as teachers, as urban reformers in settlement houses, they were ready to make their own way, armed with the tools their education had wrought. The needs and desires of a post-Civil War, educated population of women were in direct conflict with Anderson's vision of missionary work.

The pressure for single women to become missionaries took form as a proposal to organize women's boards that would act as auxiliaries to the men's administrative structures, provide oversight and control of women missionaries, and be capable of raising money. During Anderson's administration, the idea of a women's board was rejected, based on his belief both in the importance of the Christian family as a model abroad, and on his concern that the presence of single women, who were not ministers and whose central function would be education, would tend to elevate education and threaten the creation of the indigenous, culturally local church. At home, however, in the context of rising political and economic opportunities for women, missionary women saw his policy as a form of exclusion and backward thinking. The incorporation of the Women's Board unsurprisingly coincided with Anderson's retirement in 1866, and the installation of Nathaniel G. Clark (1825–1896) as the new Foreign Secretary of the American Board, a new generation leader who was open to the work of women. Clark's ascendance to the position in 1868 opened the door for change within the ABCFM, not only for women but also for the direction of the organization. In that year, women from both Congregationalist and Presbyterian missions formed themselves into the Women's Board of Missions as an auxiliary of the ABCFM and in the next year founded their own periodical, *Life and Light for Heathen Women*.²³ Clark welcomed the formation of the women's boards, over the objections of conservative members and public sentiment.

As an example of the far-reaching impact of the formation of the women's boards, the Mount Holyoke Missionary Association was founded in 1879, and in 1888 pledged "to identify ourselves more fully with the organized missionary effort to hereby form the Mount Holyoke Missionary Association, auxiliary to the Hampshire County Branch of the Woman's Board of Missions".²⁴ The implication of this act was to make official the college's commitment to promoting missionary work among the women students. Bess Vickery, historian of Mount Holyoke missionaries, pointed out the enormity of the decision to serve: "Naive and inexperienced, the majority of these young women had traveled less than fifty miles from their places of birth before embarking for societies that were nearly incomprehensible within the aegis of their upbringing. Often,

in addition, the people they met were generally hostile to the aims of the missionary movement of which they were a part.”²⁵

The creation of women’s missionary organizations was repeated across the country at women’s colleges, seminaries, and academies. While the timing was right for American women to take a more independent role as missionaries, the views of the new generation of women missionaries marked a dramatic shift in the rhetoric of the missionary enterprise. According to missionary historian Noriko Ishii,

What characterized the movement was the coexistence of two concepts: that the American women were superior to the native women in mission fields and that both could unite in sisterhood despite their cultural differences because they were women, which the Americans believed was universally the weaker gender in relation to men in each of their societies.²⁶

The combined ideas of western superiority and gender solidarity were a dramatic departure from Rufus Anderson’s vision of creating an autonomous indigenous Christian church. On the contrary, the new generation of educated American women missionaries envisioned a hierarchical relationship, believing their superiority lay in Christianity, and in this they could elevate the less fortunate by providing them a Christianity-based liberal education. At the same time, they imagined bonds of sympathy based in western concepts of gender inequality. Thus, in the minds of the women missionaries, the dual goals of evangelism and education were not contradictory, but rather led to the same end.²⁷

The importance of Christianity in American nineteenth-century women’s social movements centered on the belief that it had done more to improve the condition of women materially, socially, and spiritually than any other religion had. Even more radical wings of the women’s movement drew on the moral authority and prestige of Christianity to legitimate their causes. Women promoters of the missionary movement repeatedly contrasted the esteem Christianity gave to women with the degradation to which they felt women were subject in other religious traditions. The women’s foreign missionary movement exhorted white women to spread among the “heathen” the benefits of Christian womanhood. Their keen sense of responsibility toward those they considered less fortunate cannot be underestimated, nor can their inexorable sense of superiority. Unacknowledged, however, or perhaps unrecognized, the introduction of a liberal education as central to the missionary agenda came at the expense of ceding control to an independent indigenized church.

The single women who traveled as missionaries around the world occupied a space that was different from the missionary wife. The women who traveled alone with the Women’s Boards of the ABCFM were well-educated teachers like Annie Howe, whose education and experiences equipped them for careers in education and medicine, and who independently chose the overseas mission field. Many of the missionaries who stayed the longest and had the most impact

on the communities in which they worked remained unmarried, dedicated to the institutions they helped to found, fund, and manage. The Women's Boards drew their personnel mostly from the unmarried graduates of newly established women's seminaries, normal schools, and colleges. Moreover, in the United States, nurses who had learned their skills on the Civil War battlefields were an untapped resource of executive ability, and valuable expertise in medicine and health care.

Judging from the length of time many single women stayed, their involvement with their projects was a key sustaining factor, their local connections serving emotional and psychological needs in ways more fulfilling than was the case with missionary wives, whose sense of home was more fraught with conflict as they struggled to maintain model Western homes and raise Christian families in "heathen lands".

The rise in women's auxiliary organizations at home was an important factor in the longevity of women's missions. By 1900, there were over forty denominational women's missionary societies, with estimates of three million American women at home actively involved in their support. The Women's Board Mission (WBM) collected money in "mite boxes" for pennies and envelopes for weekly pledges and by this means raised \$5,000 in its first year and nearly \$200,000 over the course of its first six years of operation. Women and children in local church auxiliaries, collecting small donations, raised enough money to build hospitals and schools around the world, paying the salaries of indigenous female "bible" women, and sending single women as missionary doctors, teachers, and evangelists.²⁸ These organizations created fund-raising channels for women's projects that ran separately from those of the male-dominated missionary boards, and allowed women to pursue their own philanthropic ventures. By the 1890s, under the organization of WBM, almost every missionary society had a women's branch devoted to what came to be known generically as "women's work for women". Through these organizations, women were able to create and run their own projects with an extraordinary degree of autonomy, backed by their networks of funding support.

The recruitment of female candidates, seen especially in the criteria used by the women's foreign-missionary societies, focused on a few basic qualifications which raise fundamental issues of gender and professionalization. Once their commitment to "Christ's work" was established, their "ablebodiedness" and their ability to withstand the challenge of mission work overseas were important concerns in recruitment. The implication that a stronger constitution would be required for heathen lands than would be required at home echoed colonial discourses on the hazards of living among the "heathen".²⁹ Over time, the issue of missionary selection and training became more organized and sophisticated. The Board of Mission Preparation, with offices on Madison Avenue in New York City, held conferences, published annual reports, and reprinted special reports on subjects that were interesting to a wide audience. Its special reports focused on subjects such as "The Preparation of Educational Missionaries", "The

Preparation of Medical Missionaries”, “The Preparation of Women for Foreign Service”. On a more specialized level, pamphlets were written on how best to prepare for specific regions—China, Japan, India, or Latin American. By 1910, most boards expected the missionary women educators to be college graduates, with prior teaching experience, and capable of completing successfully the ABCFM’s requirement for two years of language study in all mission fields.

Eventually, the hopes, beliefs, expectations, and imaginings of the missionaries would be challenged and ultimately transformed in the missionary fields of their destinations. In each location, the political, social, environmental and religious contexts would exert pressure on the missionaries, forcing them to adapt to local conditions, and to the expectations of the people they came to change. In every case, the missionary schools, hospitals, and churches became hybrids of the contesting cultures. Not only did the institutions reflect the multiple forces operating on them, but the missionaries themselves came to both exert their influences and accommodate local customs and expectations. It is in these transformations in both directions that the history and meaning of the missionary enterprise lies.

The mission to Japan proved to be a special case. Missionaries were permitted to enter Japan during a period of extraordinary transformation of Japanese society, as it opened its doors to the world after 250 years of relative isolation. The desires of the new Japanese leaders to become modern coincided with the arrival of missionaries who represented what was both desirable and detrimental to the formation of a modern Japanese national identity. It was a time when flexibility and accommodation on the part of the missionaries would be an essential characteristic for survival. Annie Howe was one of many missionary women who came to Japan to Christianize through education, and in her case, through kindergarten children. She would find her commitment to education more fruitful over time than her identification with the church.

Annie Lyon Howe in Japan

By the time Annie Howe arrived, Japan already had a long and tumultuous relationship with Western missionaries. The history of modern missionary work in Japan began several years prior to the start of the Meiji Restoration in 1868. In 1854, following the arrival of Commodore Matthew C. Perry, it became known that Japan had negotiated peace treaties with several Western powers, and the ABCFM in the United States requested one of its representatives in China to go to Japan. The right of permanent residence for foreigners, however, was not established until 1859. During that year, four ports were declared open to foreign commerce and foreign residents—Nagasaki, Yokohama, Kobe, and Hakodate—allowing missionaries of three Protestant churches to begin developing roots in Japan.³⁰

During the initial decade between these first arrivals and 1872, missionaries faced hostility both from the factions opposed to foreign intrusions, particularly

among the samurai class, and from the government, which prohibited Christianity among its citizens. This period, however, was also marked by government efforts first to separate Buddhism from Shinto, and then to elevate Shinto to a position of centrality in the new national ideology. The efforts to demote Buddhism had already begun during the late Tokugawa period, prior to the Meiji Restoration, but were strongest in the late 1860s. Within weeks of the formation of the new government in 1868, regulations streamed from the Office of Rites effectively separating Shinto and Buddhist practices, clergy, and property, and excluding Buddhist leaders from positions of policy formation.³¹

The situation for missionaries changed dramatically in 1872. Western powers with whom Japan was attempting to form treaties insisted upon safety and freedom of religious practice for the missionaries. Among the Japanese leadership, despite centuries of intense anti-Christian propaganda, extensive contact with the West had by then not only softened fears about Christianity, but in the minds of some, elevated Christianity to the religion of progressive nations. Moreover, in the towns and villages, according to George Sansom, "the mass of the people were indifferent, not hostile to Christianity".³² In addition to the easing of restrictions against Christianity, missionaries stood to benefit from a new emphasis on universal education, an area in which they had already become well established. In that year, the number of Protestant missionaries arriving in Japan doubled, bringing the total number to 55. Missionary activity continued to increase thereafter, both in numbers and in groups represented, including Catholics, Baptists, Episcopalians, Methodists, the American Home Mission, and Presbyterians. The missions began their work in Japan by establishing elementary schools, secondary girls' schools, and the pinnacle of Christian education in Japan, the Doshisha University in Kyoto, founded by Amherst-educated Neeshima Jo in 1875.³³

By the end of the 1870s, this burst of enthusiasm for western learning had again begun to cool over fears that Western and Christian influence was weakening Japan's cultural core, and reactions to the extremes of foreign influence surfaced in the 1880s and 1890s. As the sentiment that Japan needed a unifying ideology grew, the curriculum came to reflect a large chasm between Japanese and Christian purposes, articulated as an emphasis on and control of moral education.

A series of education laws issued during the 1880s marked the shift from the expansive importation of Western education to the development of a national education ideology. The laws not only chronicle the formation of national education policy, but link the centrality of teaching the Japanese ethical system in the schools to the fate of Christian education in Japan. In this process, missionary educators were both welcomed for their expertise and marginalized for their foreignness. A National curriculum was codified in the Educational Ordinance of 1879, and revised in 1880. The 1879 version had placed ethics instruction at the end of the list of standard elementary school subjects (reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and history). The new version engineered

by influential Confucianists, moved ethics to the top of the list. In 1881, the “Guidelines for Elementary School Teachers”, evidenced the “same emphasis on promoting imperial loyalty and indigenous morality”. Moreover, licensing guidelines for teachers insisted on the appointment of “Confucian scholars” to teach ethics.³⁴ Richard Rubinger argues that by 1889, although the centralization of education raised standards, minimized class inequities, and broadened access to schooling, it also weakened the private sector. “The centralized bureaucracy of the 1880s inevitably brought with it diminishing possibilities for individual and local influence in the control and practice of education . . .”³⁵ The private schools, which included the Christian schools, were no longer outside the system, but were regulated appendages of it.

Following the adoption of the new constitution in 1889, the Educational Rescript of 1890 was issued, ushering in a period of institutionalized nationalism and government imposed anti-Christianity in the elementary school curriculum. Despite a new constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion, Christianity, which had enjoyed a brief period of favor among the elites both as a personal faith and as the religion of “civilization”, was again under attack, most directly with regard to education.³⁶ In a controversy that came to be known as the “Conflict between Religion and Education”, Japanese Christians were targeted, under the claim that because Christianity lacked a national spirit, “Christianity is fundamentally at odds with the spirit of the Rescript.”³⁷

It was in the midst of these ideological conflicts over the proper Japanese education that Annie Lyon Howe (1852–1943) came to Japan in 1887 as a Congregational missionary, attached to the ABCFM.³⁸ Howe was 35-years old and already an experienced teacher when she arrived in Japan. A graduate of Rockford Female Seminary in Rockford Illinois, Howe was molded by the religious and academic standards that were modeled after Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts.³⁹ After graduating, Howe was drawn to the new field of kindergarten education at the Chicago Froebel Association in the 1870s, where the American strain of kindergarten education was just taking hold. She began her career as a pioneer in the nascent field of early childhood education, teaching in a kindergarten on the north side of Chicago, one of the first to be established in that city.⁴⁰

Howe had joined the Bethany Union Church in Chicago in 1872, where she met Carrie Electa Atkinson, a missionary living in Japan. When, some years later, Atkinson asked her to start a kindergarten in Japan, Howe was ready to go. Howe was among the new generation of college-educated women who recognized and were absorbed by the importance of emerging ideas about child development, and simultaneously with the welcoming and more compatible vision of the missionary. Her educational goals, formed at the cutting edge of child development theory, went well beyond bible-level literacy to reproducing western educational models both for children and for training teachers. Traveling as a single woman under the auspices of the ABCFM Women’s Boards, her mission was to bring Christianity to Japanese children through modern education and

then through the children to their parents.⁴¹ She arrived in Kobe in 1887 to find that the women of the Congregationalist Kobe Church had begun plans for the church sponsored kindergarten. The women included both Japanese and American Christians. There were 20 kindergartens in Kobe at that time, including two Japanese kindergartens associated with government elementary schools and the rest with private Japanese schools.⁴²

By the time of Howe's arrival, much of the public hostility toward Christianity had waned, however, government restrictions against the travel and residency of foreigners had once again increased. Howe reported on "the government restrictions which of course do not allow much freedom so far as Christianity is concerned".⁴³ The records of the missionaries are predictably enthusiastic and optimistic, but the numbers of converted Christians remained small.⁴⁴ The political efforts toward consolidating a national ideology undoubtedly militated against popular interest in Christianity. The school nevertheless attracted Japanese mothers, whether Christian or not, for its educational value.

Howe spent the first two years of her time in Japan studying Japanese, in which she became fluent, and teaching English at the YMCA. She investigated the government kindergarten methods and materials as best she could, though she did not feel entirely welcome. Shortly after her arrival she wrote, "The kindergartens here in Kobe are under the government, and any uninvited instruction on my part would be resented."⁴⁵ In this, Howe reveals the positioning that would characterize her years in Japan: she felt both superior in her educational standards, and willing to accept and accommodate her Japanese counterparts, and the control of the government over curriculum.

While she and the Congregationalist women of Kobe continued with their plans for the new school, Howe had Japanese kindergarten books translated into English in order to know what was being taught in the Japanese schools and what the teachers had read. She saw that the Japanese kindergartens had taken the idea of the kindergarten and adapted it to a blend of Japanese educational values for moral and physical training, to the idea that the kindergarten was to supplement the work of mothers and prepare for elementary school, and only lastly, and inconsistently, to Froebel's systematic lessons and games. By the late 1880s, Japanese moral education was already the emphasis in the kindergarten curriculum.

In 1889, the Kobe church opened a kindergarten and a kindergarten teacher's training school, headed by Howe. It was given the name *Glory (Shoei) Kindergarten*.⁴⁶ This was the first, and would become the most prominent Christian training school in the country. The first kindergarten class enrolled 50 children. Clearly, the Japanese mothers' enthusiasm for kindergarten education overcame any anti-Christian sentiment they may have entertained, or suspicion of Howe's foreign ways.⁴⁷ Moreover, the first kindergarten teacher-training class enrolled 20 Japanese students. Howe was strict in her interpretation of Froebel, following the text, games, and Western moral lessons in his manual. Moreover, she believed that his teachings were consistent with her own principles of divine

rather than state loyalties, and included Bible stories and Christmas celebrations. As the Japanese government became stricter in its regulation of private schools, Howe would compromise by including Japanese national holiday celebrations, hanging a picture of the emperor, and conforming to the Japanese practice of Saturday classes.

In its first year, the training school was already under public scrutiny, as this was the year the new Constitution was issued. Moreover, while the forthcoming Imperial Rescript on Education was being drafted for release in 1890, there was extensive public debate and much anticipation in the Christian community over how restrictive the Rescript would be. As described above, the Imperial Rescript clearly set the tone for circumscribing Christian education.

Dissatisfied with the content of the Japanese kindergarten material, Howe began a translation of Froebel's *Mother Play*⁴⁸ into Japanese. It was to be one of her most significant contributions to kindergarten education in Japan, in both Christian and non-Christian sectors. In addition to translating the lessons, she had an artist create woodblock prints of the pictures, originally set in a German context, redrawn in a Japanese context. Howe reported that she found the Japanese educators were interested in the translation, but still distrustful of her, both as a foreigner and as a Christian. "The Japanese look to me for the real guidance, yet so jealous lest a foreigner should have too much authority."⁴⁹ This situation foreshadows the tensions Howe would face with her own schools, and the ambiguity in the Japanese policy toward the missionaries. On the one hand, teachers continued to welcome the western educational materials and pedagogy, while keeping at arms length the appearance of Christian control over the school. Little by little, as graduates of the kindergarten moved successfully into the public schools, the reputation of the school as a model of Froebelian instruction spread. Teachers from Osaka, Kyoto, and Tokyo came to visit her school, and in 1891, the public schools in Kyoto invited Howe to instruct their kindergarten teachers. In 1892, the first of her own students from the training school began a kindergarten in Hokkaido. By 1893, Howe had gained a reputation substantial enough that the Kobe government invited Glory Kindergarten to join the Japanese exhibition at the Columbia Exposition in Chicago (see Figure 4.1).⁵⁰

In 1893, the same year Howe's kindergarten was represented at the Japan exhibit in Chicago, the anti-Western Education Council in Tokyo proposed that the Japanese take control of all foreign schools. In Kyoto, the government refused permission to open a new Christian kindergarten. Despite such persistent ambivalence toward Christian education within the government and by individuals, Howe and her book continued to be very well received. Her chronicle of these years is buoyant, replete with reports of talks, lectures, visits to Japanese kindergartens, and visits of Japanese observers to her school. In her first six years of service, Howe's personal feeling of success and pride was that the training school graduated 23 Japanese teachers, five of whom started kindergartens of their own.⁵¹

Howe returned to the United States on sabbatical in 1895 to study the history of education at the University of Chicago for six months and immerse herself in kindergarten activities in her native country. Significant change occurred in Japan during her absence, however, and when she returned in 1897, she found that many missionaries had returned home, forced to close their schools by new laws limiting religious instruction. One of Howe's own teachers confronted her with an open rejection of Christianity, declaring that "while the Training School is a mission affair, the kindergarten is Japanese".⁵² The implication was that the kindergarten should be more aligned with Japanese moral training, and that it should no longer be entirely in Howe's control. Marius Jansen argues that by this time, Japanese teachers had begun to take control of Western teaching methods, modifying the content of curricula to conform to Japanese norms. Stated succinctly by Jansen, "by the 1890s those 'foreign' teachers had for the most part been replaced by their students".⁵³ Not only had the students learned from the teachers, but more to the point, Japanese teachers were modifying Western curricula to support the consolidation of a Japanese national curriculum, and national identity. Government regulations would be directed to kindergartens explicitly in the 1899 Imperial Ordinance on Elementary Education and Infant Training.

Howe found herself in competition for good kindergarten teachers when a Japanese kindergarten training school opened in Kobe, and potential Japanese kindergarten teachers had to choose between the schools. The problems peaked in 1898–1899. Discussing local kindergarten teachers' clubs, Howe remarked, "These clubs in Kyoto and Osaka will not touch Christianity with gloves."⁵⁴ The Educational Rescript of 1899, she had learned, would decide who controlled the school—the mission or the government. Before that time, private kindergartens were not directly affected by the government's curricular regulations for elementary education, though they were subjected to the same skepticism of things Western articulated in the 1890 Education Rescript. The seriousness of the situation was apparent in Howe's letters. She believed that the school had to be in her control or she would have to leave. Assuming the worst, she confided her intention to resign, deciding that ten years after her arrival was a good breaking point. If she stayed, she predicted, "As the kindergarten was run with permission from the government, and Christianity was not formally allowed, there might be some time when there could be trouble."⁵⁵

In 1899, the government ended the extraterritoriality rule, allowing free travel and residence of foreigners. Although the government gave more freedom to foreigners in some respects, it also made them subject to Japanese law, adding considerably to the degree of control the government could exercise over specific activities of foreigners, foreign religion, and schools.

The Educational Rescript of 1899 provided the philosophical grounds to contain the spread of Christian kindergarten education in Japan. Under the cabinet of 1899, the government prohibited religious instruction in the schools, whether government or private, officially deeming Christianity incompatible

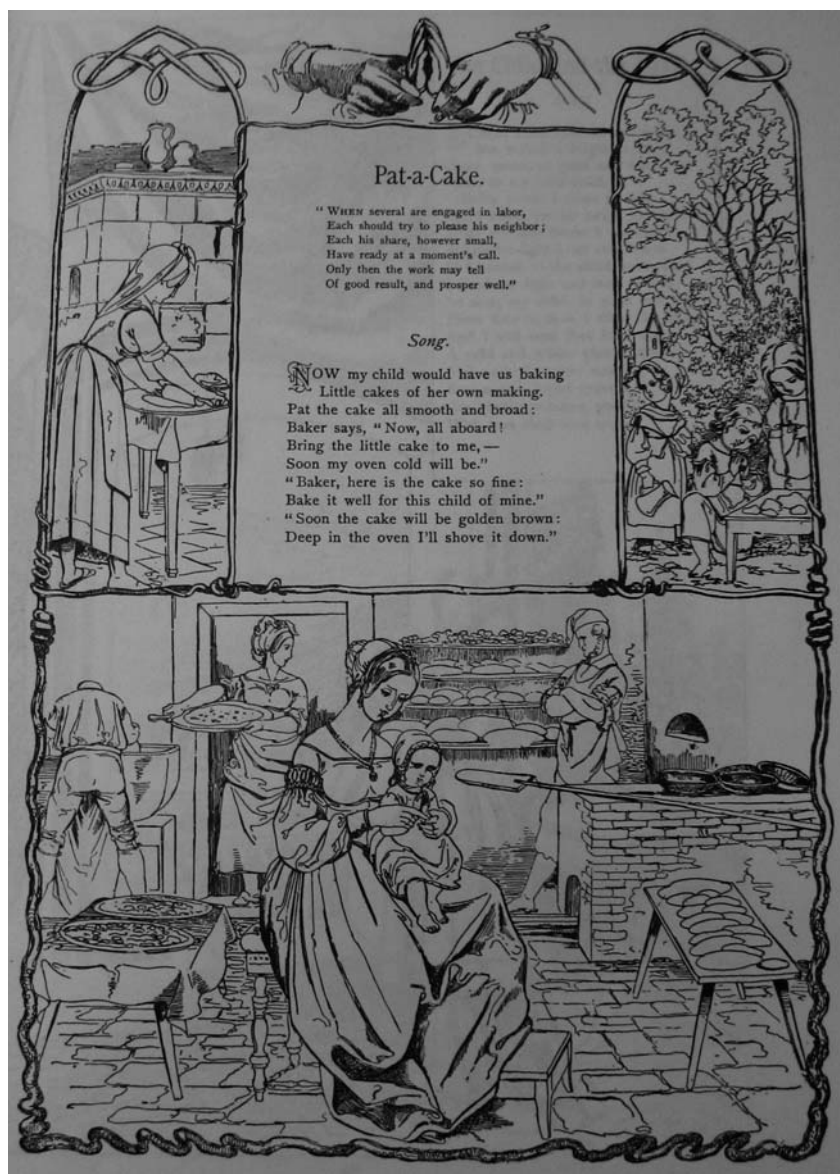


Figure 4.1 Illustrations from Froebel's *Mother Play*, in original and Howe's Japanese translation.



Figure 4.1 (Continued).

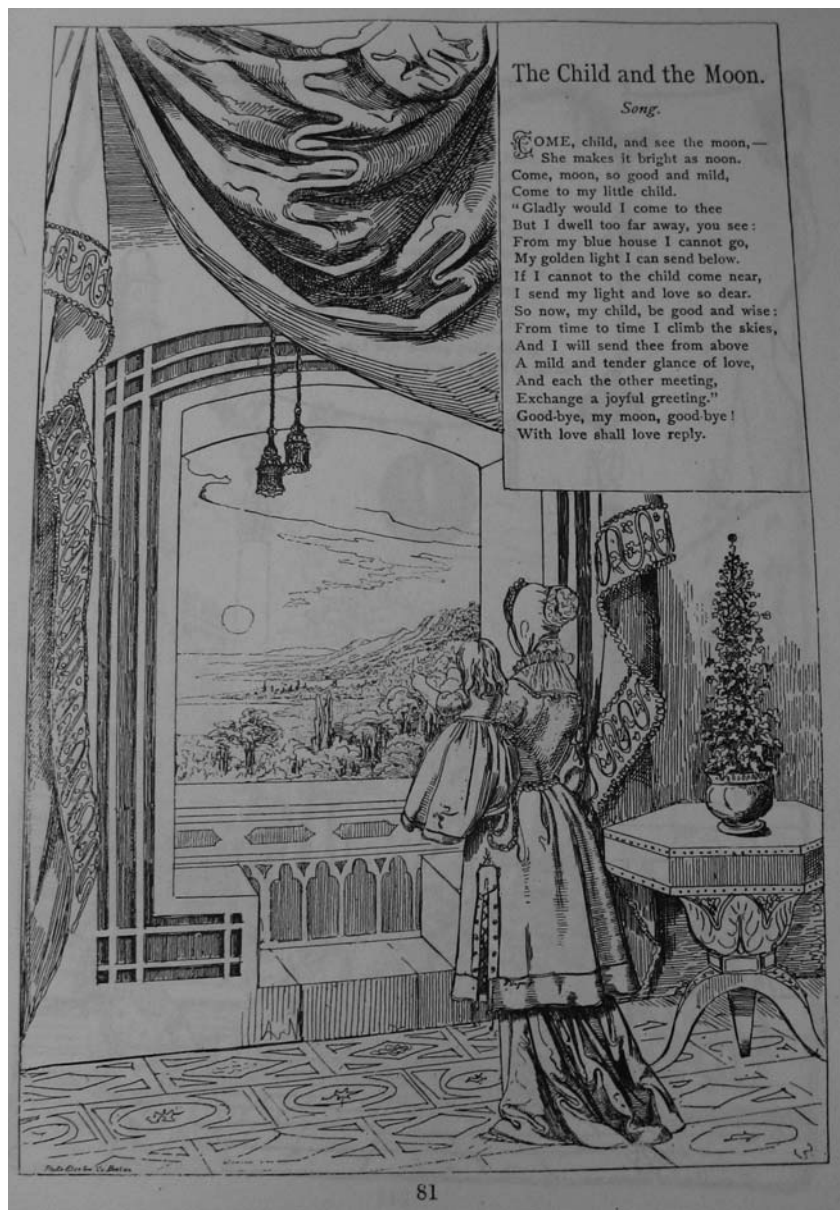


Figure 4.1 (Continued).



Figure 4.1 (Continued).



Figure 4.1 (Continued).

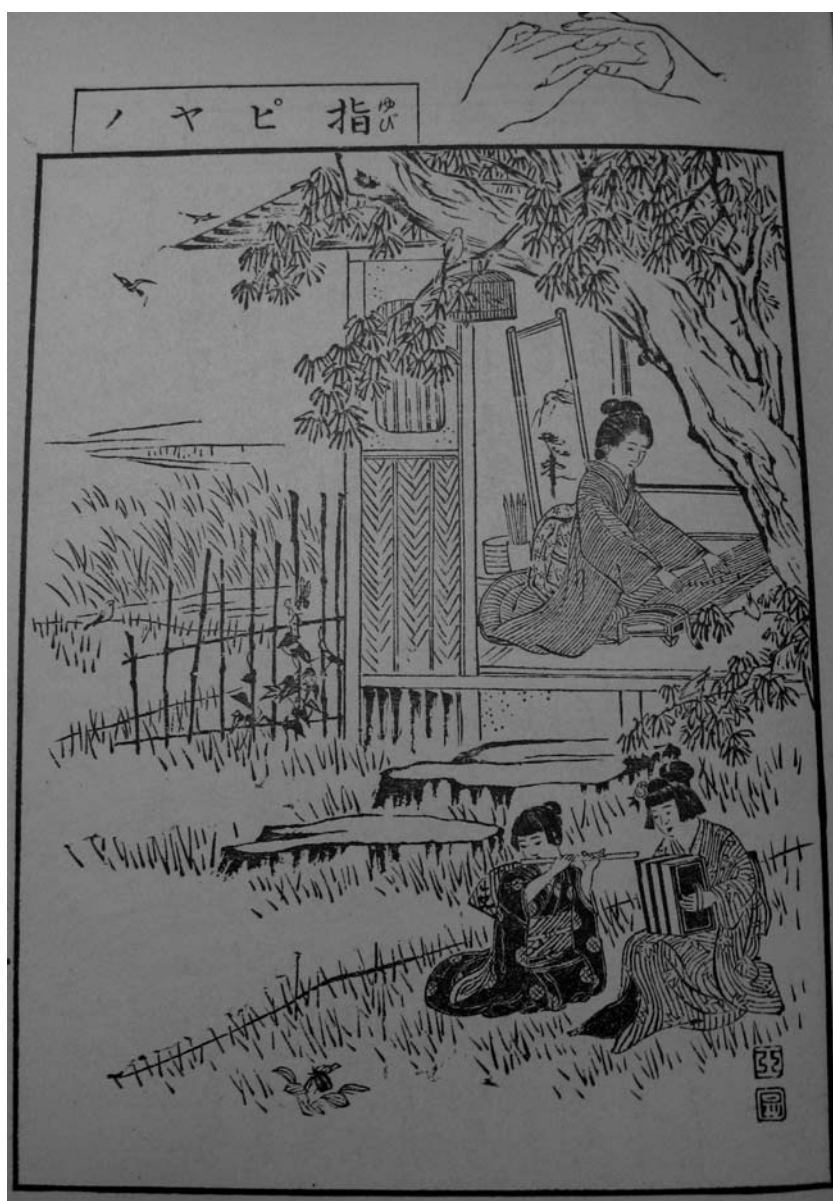


Figure 4.1 (Continued).

with national loyalty. It expanded the instructions for the content of kindergarten education, reinforcing the earlier ideas that the kindergarten was to enable children to become "sound in mind and body, cultural morals, and to help home education".⁵⁶ The prohibition of religious instruction in the schools, it should be noted, also disadvantaged Buddhist schools. The prohibition may have been intended less as an anti-religious effort and more as a means to control and centralize the curriculum. The outcome nevertheless decimated Christian education in Japan.

In response, the Tokyo missions had to close their primary schools. Doshisha University, long considered the bastion of Christian higher education, succumbed to government regulations by closing its secondary schools and removing Christian subjects from its curriculum. (Although the study of Christianity was not banned in private colleges, all benefits, such as deferment from military service for education, would be rescinded if the Christian curriculum were continued.) It was not clear, however, how this rule would affect Glory Kindergarten. The training school was exempt because the regulations applied only to children under the age of 14, the last year of compulsory education.

In the end, Annie Howe had to apply for permission to be principal of the training school. Under the government rules for the Establishment and Maintenance of Primary Schools and Kindergartens, issued in 1899, a foreigner could be principal of a school if he or she could show sufficient evidence of Japanese language proficiency. After an oral examination in Japanese, Howe was approved to be head of the training school, to be principal, and to be an officially authorized teacher in Japan. Howe considered it a triumph, both personally, for the continued presence of Christianity, and for progressive education in Japan. After more than a decade of receiving praise for her work, it is telling that she expressed no private or public resentment toward the new regulations requiring a demonstration of her ability. As it turned out, the banning of religious instruction was to apply explicitly to children over the age of six, which exempted the kindergarten and permitted its continuation.

As a consequence of the ideology symbolized by the 1899 Rescript, an inevitable split arose between the Japanese kindergarten teachers and the Christian teachers. Some Japanese supporters of the Rescript openly rejected the Christian kindergartens, expressing their displeasure that the Christian kindergartens were allowed to continue. Deepening the division was the fact that by this time over 30 separate Protestant denominations were represented in Japan. Many Japanese saw the range of regional and national churches as antithetical to a single national loyalty and, with the exception of the Catholic church, which was perceived as universalistic, mistrusted the interdenominational divisiveness acted out in Japan, as elsewhere. George Sansom argues that this situation curtailed the spread of Christianity and created distrust.⁵⁷ Howe herself complained about the "lamentable state of things when missionaries could not commune together, nor recognize each other as Christians".⁵⁸ Despite her personal efforts, the issues dividing foreign and Japanese kindergarten educators were beyond

Howe's control. Faced with governmental enmity and Christian disunity, Howe took the situation as a challenge, declaring, "I am going to establish something out here which will compel the recognition and sanction of the most progressive and thoughtful educators both Japanese and foreign."⁵⁹ She decided on education as the centerpiece of her missionary efforts, and determined that the best she could do was to unite the various Christian denominations providing kindergartens.

The state sponsored isolation of Christianity from public education resulted inevitably in organizational segregation among educators. In 1906, Howe organized and presided over the first annual meeting of the Christian Kindergarten Union of Japan. At that time, kindergartens represented a significant proportion of all Christian educational work. Twenty Christian kindergartens, 12 denominations, and various nationalities were represented. The new union included neither private nor public Japanese kindergartens. Moreover, the bylaws stipulated that the annual meeting would be conducted in English, guaranteeing a missionary-only membership. It is not clear from the record whether this action was intended to exclude Japanese kindergarten educators, or whether the Japanese educators themselves were unwilling to associate with the Christian organization. Regardless, the division became institutionalized with the formation of the Kindergarten Union of Japan. Howe was the first president, aligning herself completely with the foreign, Christian educators.

In her presidential address, Howe emphasized the need for unity among the 12 denominations represented and expressed her hope for future integration with the Japanese kindergarten associations as well. Moreover, Howe directly addressed the chasm that existed between the Christian kindergarten teachers and the Japanese. "They have their associations, their publications, it is folly for us to remain ignorant of it all, when mutual acquaintance might result in mutual respect and mutual assistance."⁶⁰ Implying that the Christian teachers had limited understanding of Japan, she implored the members to know more about the Japanese education system into which the young kindergarten student would be matriculating. Howe clearly viewed her goals as the improvement of kindergarten education in Japan, raising standards of training for the teachers, and a faithful adherence to Froebel's systematic plan. Given the conditions that constrained her, these goals separated, and elevated, her commitment to education over her commitment to Christian conversion. She neither criticized Japanese kindergartens nor remarked on the limitations placed on Christian kindergartens in Japan. Rather, she leveled criticism directly at the Christian-denominational kindergartens themselves for having isolated themselves.

To the Japanese government, the kindergarten was of minor importance in the early stages of consolidating a national educational system, and the Ministry of Education paid scant attention to the kindergarten curriculum until 1899. The relatively late interest by the government puts into perspective the

degree to which the prevailing governmental ideology toward the fundamental principles of education alone influenced the majority of kindergartens, without direct regulation. Even with the kindergarten not directly affected, the Japanese teachers nevertheless subscribed to government regulations affecting the public schools. Thus transformed by consensus rather than law, the kindergarten idea was embraced by Japanese educators and parents for its education value, divorced in practice from its Western Christian origins.

For the Christian community, however, kindergartens loomed large on the education horizon. With only 27 kindergartens from all denominations, kindergartens nevertheless represented 42 percent of their efforts in the area of education, making the kindergarten the key not only to spreading Christian teaching to the children, but also to potentially gaining access to the hearts and minds of Japanese parents through the children. Restrictions on Christian education hurt missionary efforts at the elementary and secondary levels, and at Doshisha University, leaving the kindergarten as the central Christian educational enterprise.⁶¹

The “Taisho Democracy” from 1912 to 1925 proved to be a time of experimentation and progressivism. The Montessori method of instruction was introduced in Japan in 1911, as were the ideas of John Dewey, and generally new methods of instruction were welcomed. These changes also opened dialog between Christian and Japanese kindergarten educators. By 1914, a rapprochement began between the Japanese and missionary educators when an entire convention session was devoted to Japanese kindergartens, conducted in Japanese. In 1916, the KU of Japan was admitted as a full member of the International Kindergarten Union and by 1917 the bylaws regarding the use of English was repealed. In 1926, Annie Howe was coming to the end of her career, and, at 74-years old, she was asked to retire by the ABCFM. The Showa era (1926–1989) ushered in a new period of drastic restrictive regulations against foreign teachers. Although a liberal atmosphere in the Japanese kindergartens would persist through the 1930s, missionary teachers were suddenly again without permits to continue, and Howe was neither asked to nor wanted to continue fighting for the autonomy of her school.

Under Howe, Glory Kindergarten graduated more than 1400 children, and 270 students from the teacher-training school—all Japanese though not all Christian. Fifty eight of those training school students were in charge of Christian kindergartens, and more were either teaching or in charge of Japanese kindergartens.⁶² For a school of its small size, Glory proved to be a prodigious model for kindergarten education standards throughout Japan for many years. As the Japanese schools were increasingly centralized and based on national moral principles, Howe continued to represent the small, independent Christian presence in Japan. During her years there, she received praise for her kindergarten work, largely divorced from Japan’s official rejection of Christian education.

Annie Howe’s departure from Japan was bittersweet. She was lavishly honored by Japanese educators, including teachers she had trained and several

generations of kindergarten graduates, while she lost control of her school. She was remembered for the contributions she had made to Japanese education, personally transcending the internecine struggles for a national ideology that characterized the modernization of Japanese education during her years of service. In an odd irony, in 1941 the Emperor of Japan awarded Howe the rare Blue Ribbon Medal, the highest award an individual can receive from the government for her long-distinguished public service in education. She retired to her brother's home in New York, where she died in 1943.

Conclusion

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the missionary agenda witnessed a dramatic shift from Rufus Anderson's originating ideas about propagating indigenous churches throughout the world. Anderson wanted the missionaries not only to Christianize but to model the orderly Christian family. The change in allowing women to participate in missionary fields first as wives and then as single women had large, unintended consequences which were beneficial, detrimental, and complex. At home, it created an opportunity for educated, committed women to do work of value and meaning to themselves. It also provided the missionary agencies a newly available workforce to support missionary families and offer the education essential to Christian conversion. At colleges such as Mount Holyoke and Rockford College, the enthusiastic presidents found a new focus and direction for their emphasis on Christian service.

Abroad, building schools for girls resulted in a complexity of outcomes. The case of Japan is illustrative, even with the unique circumstances under which missionaries were required to work. After the Meiji Restoration, elementary education for girls was limited and missionary schools provided an opportunity for education that would have otherwise been unavailable. Missionaries were limited to coastal, urban centers, where Western education appealed to former samurai and upper-class families, predominantly, who sent their children to the missionary schools wanting the best education emanating from the "modern" world. Missionaries, who were relatively unsuccessful in converting the Japanese to Christianity in significant numbers, looked to education as a means of introducing Christian ideas. The result was the mutual benefit of Japanese girls having access to an excellent education, and the missionary educators having students to teach and influence.

At the same time, missionary teachers asserted a greater hierarchical distance between themselves and the indigenous teachers and students than had been the case a generation earlier. They kept control of education and information in their hands, and created schools that reproduced their education at home. It was a form of education that could not be transferred to the local teachers, for whom the style and content of education was forever foreign. In Kobe and Nagasaki missionaries built their school buildings on hills,

signaling the distance and the hierarchical relationships with the local people. And there was no end point to their authority. With the creation of the women's missionary boards, the spotlight shining on the idea of the self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing church swung away from the indigenous church and onto the missionary teacher. In the end, it would be only through government regulation that the schools were fully placed in the hands of Japanese educators.

By the 1880s, the determination of the Japanese government to consolidate a Japanese national identity and morality effectively distanced the missionary schools from the mainstream and forced the missionaries either to abandon their Christian curriculum or close their schools. In Annie Howe's case, the teachers made it clear that she could train teachers, but she could not teach the children. She would either have to adapt to Japanese ideas for national identity, which did not include Christianity, lose accreditation, or close her school.

While many missionaries went home, some schools chose to keep their Christian curriculum and lose accreditation, and others chose to keep accreditation and abandon their Christian curriculum. The Doshisha University in Kyoto famously, and dishearteningly for the missionary community, chose the latter. Annie Howe stayed, though. As it turned out, kindergartens were below the radar of regulations and the teacher-training school above it. She was able to keep the teacher-training school and its Christian curriculum, while creating a hybrid institution that both respected Japanese traditions and identity and maintained the flavor of a Western, Christian education. Where conversion to Christianity in Japan was the lowest of all the Asian missionary fields, nevertheless western education flourished, benefitting the students and the teachers, and winning the respect of the government. Annie Howe was able to find her place in a middle ground between American and Japanese culture, living as a missionary within the foreign-mission community, and as an educator in the Japanese community, which she came to admire. At the end of her career, Annie Howe was honored for her contributions to education in Japan, ultimately, from the Japanese point of view, disconnected from its roots in Christianity, American-style individualism, and international discourse.

What was good for the progress of American women at home had a mixed legacy abroad. Women's "traditional" place as a missionary wife more closely resembled the gender-divided societies in which the missionary served. Moreover, the older style missionary family, under Anderson's rule, foregrounded the "heathen" and the goal of creating an indigenous Christianity. The single, educated missionary of the post-Civil War generation was not easily emulated by indigenous women, and the distance between missionary and indigenous women became greater, despite the rhetoric of sisterhood. As missionary historian Dana Robert has observed, the women's missionary movement conflated culture with religion. "Women's work for Women" marked the shift from evangelizing to civilizing, with the Protestant west as the presumptive model civilization.

Notes

1. R. Pierce Beaver, *To Advance the Gospel: Selections From the Writings of Rufus Anderson* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1967), 10.
2. The Women's Boards of the ABCFM were formed in 1868. For a full discussion of the women's boards, see Noriko Ishii, *American Women Missionaries at Kobe College, 1873–1909: New Dimensions in Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004).
3. For histories of the early missionary movement, see, for example, R. Pierce Beaver, *To Advance the Gospel: Selections From the Writings of Rufus Anderson* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1967); Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of their Thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997).
4. There are several accounts of the famous "Haystack" meeting. Standard versions include William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 45; Clifton Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World: The First Half Century of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, 1810–1860* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), Ch. 1.
5. The history of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (hereafter ABCFM) is vast and complex, encompassing missionary enterprises in Japan, China, the Ottoman Empire, Africa, India, Burma, Bulgaria, and in the American west to Native Americans. The most complete archival holdings for the ABCFM is in the Houghton Manuscript Library of Harvard University, including the years from its founding in 1810 to 1967. The majority of the primary material for this article comes from the ABCFM archive of the Houghton Library of Harvard University.
6. Quoted in R. Pierce Beaver, *To Advance the Gospel: Selections From the Writings of Rufus Anderson* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1967), 61.
7. See, Lian Xi, *The Conversion of Missionaries: Liberalism in American Protestant Missions in China, 1907–1932* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1997), 7.
8. Emma Bliss, the wife of one of the ABCFM founders, Reverend H. J. Van Lenney, was the first woman to perish in service to Turkey one year after her arrival there, becoming a martyr and heroine of the missionary story.
9. Rufus Anderson, "The Theory of Missions to the Heathens, A Sermon at the Ordination of Mr. Edward Webb, as a Missionary to the Heathen" (Ware, MA, October 23, 1845).
10. R. Pierce Beaver, *To Advance the Gospel: Selections From the Writings of Rufus Anderson* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1967), 14.
11. For a brief explanation of the social gospel movement, see Janet Fishburn, "The Social Gospel as Missionary Ideology," in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810–1914: Theology, Theory and Policy*, ed. Wilbert Shenk (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 218–242.
12. See Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890); and Lincoln Steffens, *The Shame of the Cities* (New York: McClure Phillips, 1904).
13. Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1912).

14. For a discussion of Bushnell's theology, see Howard A. Barnes, *Horace Bushnell and the Virtuous Republic* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1991).
15. Seminaries for women were being proposed by Emma Willard (1787–1870) in Troy, New York, Zilpah Grant (1794–1874) in Ipswich, Massachusetts, and Catharine Beecher (1800–1878) in Hartford, Connecticut.
16. The most comprehensive analysis of the Mount Holyoke tradition and its relationship to the missionary movement is in Amanda Porterfield, *Mary Lyon and the Mount Holyoke Missionaries* (Oxford University Press, 1997). See also, Bess P. Vickery, *Mount Holyoke Courageous: A Call to the Near East* (New York: Carlton Press, 1994) and Barbara J. Merguerian, "Mt. Holyoke Seminary in Bitlis: Providing an American Education for Armenian Women," *Armenian Review*, Spring, 1990.
17. For histories of the New Divinity movement and its relationship both to social reform and to the ABCFM, see, for example, Leo P. Hirrel, *Children of Wrath: New School Calvinism and Antebellum Reform* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998); Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestants on the Eve of the Civil War* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957).
18. Amanda Porterfield, *Mary Lyon and the Mount Holyoke Missionaries* (Oxford University Press, 1997).
19. Fiske had been a student at Mount Holyoke in 1831, and then returned after her missionary experience to teach at Mount Holyoke from 1859 to 1864 when she died.
20. Alumnae records of Mount Holyoke College, University Archives, South Hadley Massachusetts.
21. Biographical records of the ABCFM missionary wives show a disproportionately high rate of women's seminary and college graduates, beginning in the mid century. ABCFM Collection, Houghton Rare Manuscript Library, Harvard University.
22. Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 128.
23. *Life and Light for Heathen Women* (Boston: Woman's Board of Missions, 1869–1872). Followed by *Light and Life for Women*, 1873–1922. Houghton ABC 91.9.
24. Bess P. Vickery, *Mount Holyoke Courageous: A Call to the Near East* (New York: Carlton Press, 1994).
25. Bess Vickery, *Mount Holyoke Courageous: Young Christian Women go to the Near East, 1840–1872* (Wellesley, MA: Roundtable Press; Rev. and expanded edition, 2000).
26. Noriko Ishii, *American Women Missionaries at Kobe College, 1873–1909: New Dimensions in Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 29.
27. These ideas are replete in the literature of the foreign missionaries, such as *Life and Light for Heathen Women* and apparent in the disappointment felt by Annie Howe when she could not bridge the cultural divide in Japan between American and Japanese women.
28. Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 129.
29. Maina Chawla Singh, *Gender, Religion, and the Heathen Lands: American Missionary Women in South Asia, 1860s–1940s* (New York: Garland, 2000), 213.
30. For a general history of the missionary enterprise in Japan, see Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity: The Great Century in Northern Africa and Asia, A.D. 1800–1914* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1944).

31. For a history of Shinto during this period, see Helen Hardacre, *Shintō and the State, 1868–1988. Studies in church and State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).
32. George B. Sansom, *The Western World and Japan: A Study in the Interaction of European and Asiatic Cultures* (London: Cresset Press, 1949), 468–488.
33. For a history of the founding of Doshisha University, see American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, “Mission News: Doshisha Supplement, No. 2” vol. 11, no. 3, Kyoto Japan, April 1899. Kobe College Archives.
34. For a detailed history of the laws affecting education during this period, see Herbert Passin, *Society and Education in Japan* (Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1965; reprint, Tokyo, 1982), 63, 210.
35. Richard Rubinger, “Education: From One Room to One System,” in *Japan in Transition*, ed. Marius Jansen and Gilbert Rozman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 195–230.
36. “Educational Rescript of 1889,” reprinted in English in Passin, *Society and Education*, appendix. Quotations in Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 132.
37. Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 127, 128.
38. Biographical materials for Annie Lyon Howe and the records for Glory (*Shoei*) kindergarten can be found in the Kobe College Archives, Nishinomiya, Japan, and in the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions Collection in the Houghton Rare Manuscript Library of Harvard University.
39. Roberta Wollons, “The Impact of Higher Education on Women: The Case of Rockford College, 1870–1920” (Paper delivered at the Midwest Conference on the History of Women, St. Paul, MN, October 1977). For the importance of Mount Holyoke in American missionary history, see Bess P. Vickery, *Mount Holyoke Courageous: A Call to the Near East* (New York: Carlton Press, 1994); and Amanda Porterfield, *Mary Lyon and the Mount Holyoke Missionaries* (Oxford University Press, 1997).
40. For the history of the kindergarten movement in the late nineteenth century, see Roberta Wollons, *Kindergartens and Cultures: The Global Diffusion of an Idea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); and Michael Shapiro, *The Child’s Garden: The Kindergarten Movement from Froebel to Dewey* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1983).
41. For a history of the Women’s Boards of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, see Noriko Ishii, *American Women Missionaries at Kobe College, 1873–1909: New Dimensions in Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004).
42. For a history of early kindergartens in Japan, see Early Childhood Education Association of Japan, ed., *Early Childhood Education and Care in Japan* (Tokyo, 1979).
43. Annie L. Howe, “Excerpts from Annie L. Howe Letters, 1887–1927,” 13. Kobe College Archives. Howe’s niece, Alice Howe, transcribed a collection of Howe’s letters from the written to typed pages (hereafter, Howe, “Excerpts”).
44. The conversion rates in Japan were well below 1 percent consistently over time.
45. Howe, “Excerpts,” 13
46. Shoei Tandai exists today as a junior college in Kobe, Japan.
47. Howe, “Excerpts,” 33, 34, 49, 51. Glory Kindergarten had a waiting list two years in advance of a child being old enough to attend.

48. Translated from: Friedrich Froebel, *The Songs and Music of Friedrich Froebel's Mother Play*, ed., Susan Blow (1895).
49. Howe, "Excerpts," 40, 90.
50. For a detailed examination of the Japan exhibit at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, see Neil Harris, "All the World a Melting Pot? Japan at the American Fairs, 1876–1904," in *Mutual Images: Essays in American-Japanese Relations*, ed., Akira Iriye (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 24–54.
51. Howe, "Excerpts," 92, 100. Also, Annie L. Howe, "Kindergartens in Japan," in *A Chapter of Mission History in Modern Japan, 1869–1985*, ed. James H. Petee, Kobe College Archives.
52. Howe, "Excerpts," 109.
53. Marius Jansen, *Japan and Its World: Two Centuries of Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 65.
54. Howe, "Excerpts," 112.
55. Howe, "Excerpts," 111.
56. Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 57; Howe, "Excerpts," 117–118; "Act of the Content and Facilities of Kindergarten Education," in *Early Childhood Education and Care in Japan*, 11.
57. George B. Sansom, *The Western World and Japan: A Study in the Interaction of European and Asiatic Cultures* (New York, 1949), 481.
58. Howe, "Excerpts," 121, 130.
59. Howe, "Excerpts," 124.
60. Kindergarten Union of Japan, President's Address, Karuizawa, August 14, 1907, Kobe College Archives.
61. "Glory Kindergarten and Training School," a pamphlet from the Annual Report of the Federated Missions in Japan, 1917. Howe, "Excerpts," 40.
62. Howe, "Excerpts," 163.

5

Idols and Art: Missionary Attitudes toward Indigenous Worship and the Material Culture on Nias, Indonesia, 1904–1920

Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz

Missionary efforts on the Indonesian island of Nias began in the early nineteenth century. The French Catholic Church had attempted to establish a mission station there in 1832, but failed. In 1865, the German Rhenish Missionary Society initiated Protestant missionary activities on the island, but made very slow progress in its efforts until the end of the nineteenth century. In the first decades of the twentieth century the Christianization of Nias' people, which was supported by the Dutch colonial government, intensified, resulting in a mass-conversion from 1916 to 1930 what became known as the "Great Repentance" movement.¹ Today, more than 90 percent of Nias' population are Christian, mainly Protestant.

The conversion to Christianity was linked to a reinterpretation of indigenous worship practices and cultural norms by the missionaries. The key question to be explored in this paper is how the missionaries dealt with the rich world of artifacts on Nias during the period of early evangelization. Their approach to the material culture, in particular wooden and stone statuary, is marked by points of conflict and difference but also by points of convergence and appraisal. Indigenous figures connected to what they identified as "idolatry"—as a focus of the monotheistic polemic—were destroyed and violated by the missionaries, as a means to eradicate spirit worship and to disparage ancestral beliefs. Other images, however, were divested of religious significance or given a new Christian one. These became works of art worthy of safeguarding as collectors' items or were relabelled as profane monuments. Cult images were placed in museums, which became new "sanctuaries." The most obvious interreligious encounter happened when native megalithic sites were matched with Christian graves and the death rituals were transformed to become acceptable to Christian doctrines. Following David Morgan, I argue that as a subject matter, the study of visual culture is a means to analyze social relations, acts of seeing and perceptions by using all imagery regarded as evidence for explanation.² In fact, from the

1970s theoretical reflections of art historians have advanced the question of how images participate in the social construction of reality. This visual field was discovered by other disciplines dealing with a broader range of artifacts moving beyond artistic and stylistic questions. The study of images and visual practice in recent years has substantially contributed to the understanding of religion and missionary history, as well as the imagery of Orientalism.³

One perspective from which to explore the initial period on Nias, when the new religion continued to be accepted, is provided by mainly unpublished sources of the German missionary Eduard Fries, who spent nearly 16 years on the island, from 1904 to 1920. Fries was a prolific author, having written more than five hundred private letters and 65 circulars which were published as circulars from 1903 to 1914 for a rising audience of nearly three hundred subscribers. He also left a legacy of 140 drawings and 20 maps of Nias and a few of Sumatra.⁴ His biography is a valuable case study of the ambiguous role in which he, as an actor, is confronted with the otherness of an alien culture, while at the same time he is part of the self-initiated transformation process. In the course of his work, the conversion experience provided him with a deeper, though ambivalent understanding of the local culture.

Eduard Fries' life

Eduard Fries was born in 1877 in Barmen, northwest Germany. His motivation in becoming a missionary was molded by his upbringing. His father had been a teacher, and later the director of the August Hermann Francke Foundation in Halle. Latter heading the East Indian Missionary Society also had founded the oldest showroom of ethnography and natural science in Germany, which Fries often visited.⁵ Unlike many of his missionary contemporaries, Fries gained an academic education extended by a missionary training program. From 1895 to 1899, he studied theology at four different German universities. In 1902, he then became a member of the Rhenish Missionary Society. Fries left one year later to travel to the Netherlands' East Indies where he stayed with his missionary relatives on Sumatra. In 1904, he arrived on Nias, where he remained for the next 16 years, during which time he also married and fathered eight children. After starting the first mission station in the interior of Nias in Sifaoro'asi, Fries then moved east in 1913 to Ombölata where he started educating local priests. Elected as the head of the Protestant mission on Nias he coordinated the missionary work on the island. In 1913, the Protestants maintained 13 missionary stations with 118 branches and 135 schools.⁶ Fries also engaged in teaching new skills, educating illiterates, providing medical treatment, recording ethnographic observations, and conducting translations. In 1920, Fries returned to Germany for the first time after 17 years. Despite his intention to return to Nias, he accepted an appointment to become the director of the Rhenish Missionary Society in Barmen. Fries passed away two years later in 1923.

Expanded meanings of Christianity

There were many ways of conceiving the encounter between white missionaries and natives.⁷ The European imagination was illustrated on the cover of a posthumous account of Fries' life published in 1925. In this picture, the missionary is dressed in a white suit and is facing a local chief with his son, both of whom are wearing traditional clothes. The golden headgear, the dagger and the *kalabubu* (necklace) characterize the latter as a headhunter and chief. The choice of contrasting colors alludes to an unequal relationship. Though the German painter Georg Röder (1867–1958) had some ethnographical knowledge of Nias, details like the facial features, the curly hair, and the dark skin recall general stereotypes of the exotic native. The lack of cultural understanding is also obvious in his portrayal of the missionary standing with his hands on his hips, a gesture which is regarded as highly offensive in Indonesia (see Figure 5.1).

For Fries, Christian mission and the benefits of superior European civilization were one and the same. In this sense, Christianization involved creating a religious identity connected to a distinctive set of dispositions like habits or outer appearance. For men, being “tidily dressed and clean” meant not chewing betel nut, having short hair, and wearing either a *sarong* (Javanese wraparound skirt) or Western clothes and shoes.⁸ From Fries' perspective, physical appearance connoted mental and moral constitutions. This moral constitution was itself inseparable from culture, of which European civilization was considered by most missionaries to be the pinnacle. Fries was charged with guiding the underdeveloped to a higher cultural level. His work on Nias, however, was two-fold. First, Fries spread Christianity as a means to civilize the so-called primitive. Secondly, impelled by a sense of moral obligation, he also strove to reduce poverty and backwardness. The missionaries set up the first primary schools and other educational programs on Nias. Through his missionary and development work, Fries aimed to strategically “twist the ‘savage’ around his small finger” as he put it.⁹ Again, the asymmetrical relationship between the knowledgeable Westerner and the naive non-Westerner becomes obvious in this statement. In Fries' usage of group labels such as natives, the Asian, and the Oriental lies the danger in generalizing specific phenomenon from Nias, which further emphasizes stereotypes of the typical Asian or the typical European. Such binary oppositions are based on assumptions of inequality. As such, he was convinced that the “serious and rational” European character sharply contrasts to the “unplanned and unstable” one of the Nias people due to their lack of ambition, diligence, and steadiness.¹⁰ These rather Germanic and bourgeois values illustrate Fries' moral outlook on life (see Figure 5.2).

Beside the transmission of a Western cultural ideal, the Christianity spread by Fries' mission also included a material side. The missionaries distributed material bait in the form of Western goods, a common practice used by the clergy in other regions as well. Fries generously distributed tobacco, Western clothes, money and, most importantly medicine, which he obtained for free from

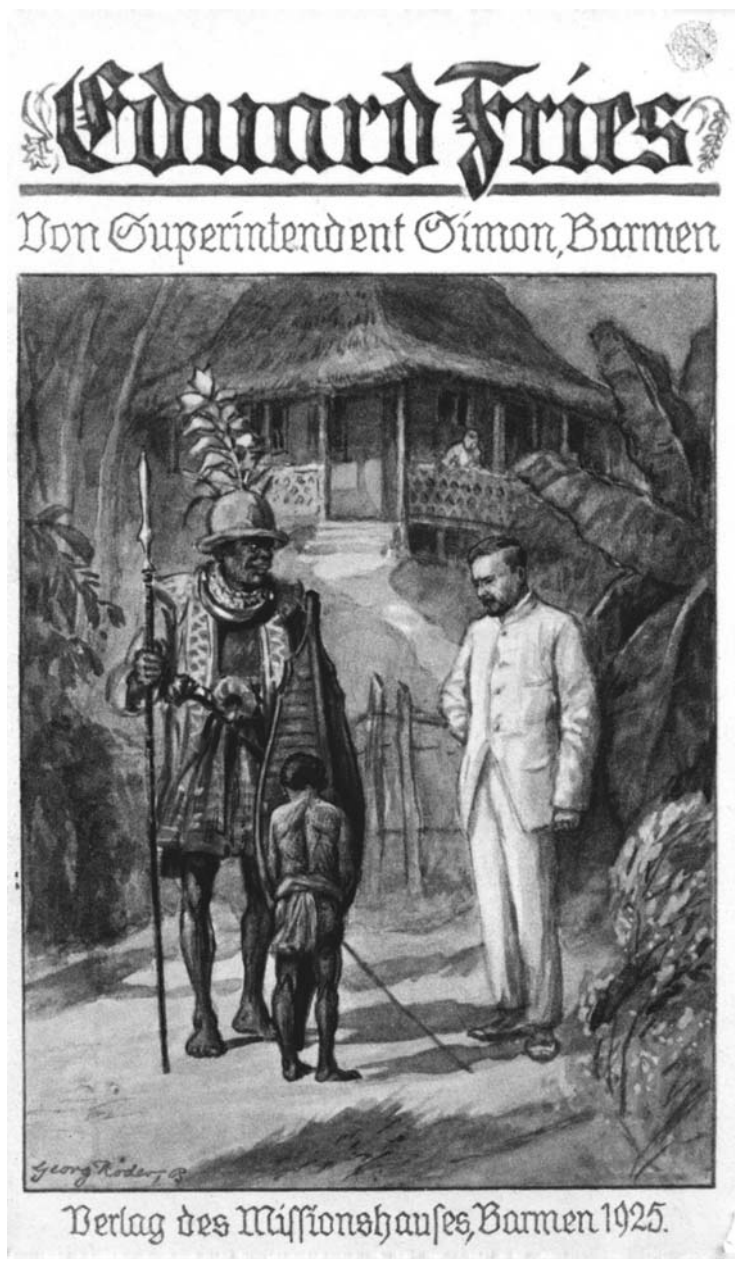


Figure 5.1 How the encounter of Eduard Fries and the Nias people was imagined. (Source: Gottfried Simon, *Eduard Fries*, Barmen: Missionshaus, 1925).

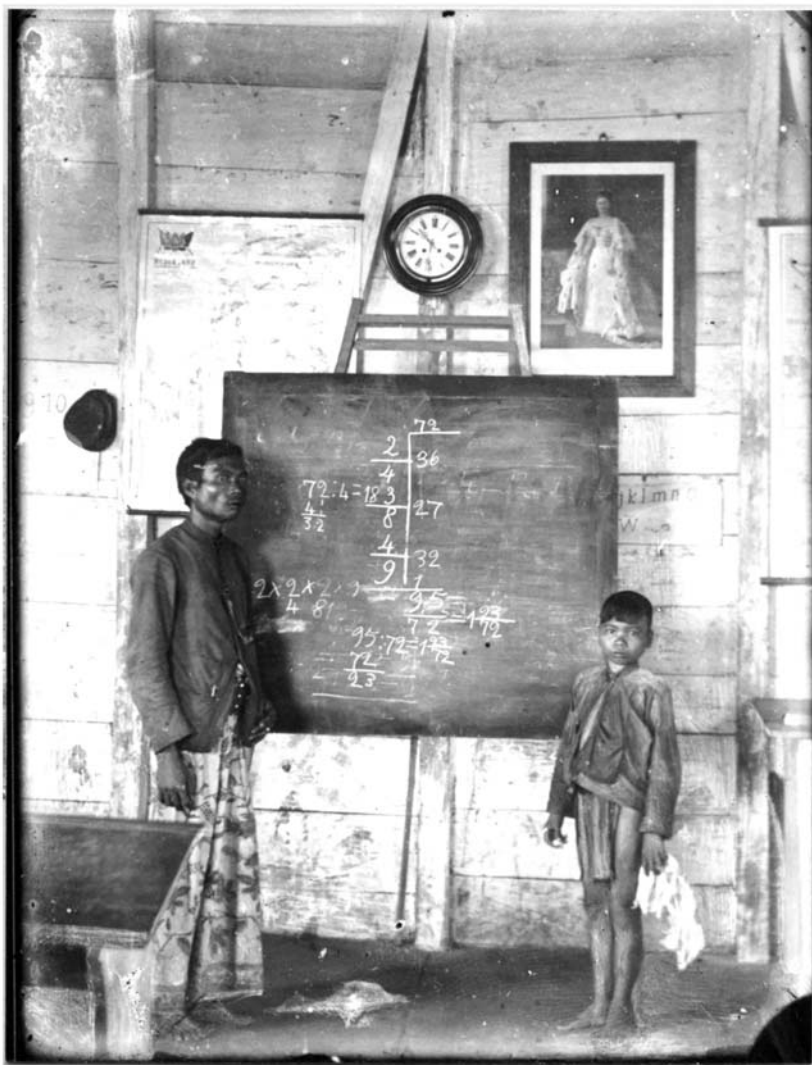


Figure 5.2 Missionary school on Nias. The picture of Queen Wilhelmina points to the fact that the Dutch government funded the education. Newly introduced are the clock on the wall and the Javanese *sarong* worn by the Nias teacher (©VEM 000908-0326).

the Dutch colonial office. The people of Nias were not only eager to gain material profit, but from their perspective, the gifts from the missionary also established a reciprocal transaction. Fries gives an example of this economy of exchange: For their starting friendship the local expected a bond to be returned by Fries who gave him an image of a church in return. This present allowed the local to enter into a relationship with the missionary.¹¹ Indeed, the exchange of goods has been recognized since the 1920s by anthropologists in Southeast Asia as an important custom demonstrating mutual interest and creating a foundation for reciprocal and long-binding obligations.¹²

The medical treatment provided by Fries and his fellow missionaries attracted large numbers of people. The ability to heal was itself interpreted as an indicator of Fries' personal power. He soon became regarded as a charismatic authority with extraordinary abilities, elevated to a status similar to that of the traditional healers, whom he would eventually replace. Quoting a local, Fries reported that some thought that he could decide matters of life and death because of a "death medicine" (an anaesthetic), which allows one "to ascend peacefully to heaven."¹³ They also, however, feared him. On one occasion, Fries was asked to leave a traditional ceremony—even though this request seriously offended hospitality—because the power of his God was believed to harm the old ghosts.¹⁴ Locals also ascribed a talismanic value to Western knowledge, specifically the written word. As the great majority of Nias people were illiterate, many focused on the "enigmatic writing of the white people" or the Bible, his "omniscient book" to decide about wrong and right in order to find crime or to use it for condemnation reveal their belief of power in the written word shortly before the shift from a society of oral traditions to fixed scripture begun.¹⁵

In his 16-year stay on Nias, Fries went through a number of phases in which he changed views. Initially driven by a sense of adventure, he explored the island with a Dutch official. The travel accounts and maps he created during these first two years passionately depict the new environment and reveal his admiration of an exotic world. The most important objective for his start was to get closer to the indigenous population and gain greater insights into their culture. In this regard, he admitted with self-irony that some of his approaches (such as participation in ritual feasts) were, strictly speaking, counter to Protestant notions of decency.¹⁶ Half a year passed and Fries entered a period of self-doubt as a missionary. His self-confidence seemed to fade during this stage as he searched for his own way of proselytizing. These doubts become clear when he was puzzled by the Nias people who stared or laughed at him like a beast in the zoo, or when villagers fell asleep, chatted, or had a look of lethargy or ignorance on their faces during prayer.¹⁷ He questioned his own competence and strived to find out what locals expected from him.¹⁸ After the arrival of his wife on Nias in September 1905, Fries began a period of acculturation. At this point, Fries and his wife moved to a new mission house in Sifaoro'asi, and his numerous pictures of this new setting reflect Fries' desire to achieve continuity and security. He also started gaining personal authority in his conversion experience. After more

than four years in the tropics, Fries finally began to describe Nias as his new home, a place in which he felt integrated into the community.¹⁹ During this phase, Fries took a rather progressive and self-critical direction, going so far as to review his Christian mission.

After spending an extended period of time in Nias, Fries came to develop an appreciation for local culture, and to view his original goal of Christian mission, with all its cultural aspects, with a degree of ambivalence. In 1907, Christianization of the local population has already gained 10,224 followers, a substantial increase from 8,360 in 1904.²⁰ Fries, however, remarked critically that contact with the Western world had also eroded unique traditional expressions of culture. As such, he began to call for an acknowledgment of the local heritage, even to defend traditional culture against Christian criticism:

Anyhow, it [indigenous music] concerns their songs, their joy, their property—people's common heritage! Sure we should not half-heartedly compromise with paganism, but neither should one confuse customs and morality and with a misguided Puritanism steal a people's spiritual property!²¹

In 1912, he expressed with regret that once warrior dances and recitals were performed at traditional feasts:

The primitive and wild Nias of the mountains, is—I dare to say—unfortunately quickly vanishing. I can not show the old “glory” of Nias to the young missionaries, who I will currently introduce into their work in Sifaoro'asi.²²

This nostalgic view alludes to the cliché of the “noble savage,” an image that mourns the culture that has been transformed or destroyed.²³ This perspective connects the process of acculturation with a melancholy aura. Fries' enthusiasm for the unspoilt natives living in an island paradise is associated with the formerly highly regarded, proud and powerful Nias warriors. This romantic retrospect reflects well his own perception of the intercultural encounter as a process of “disenchanted” the exotic alien.²⁴

Iconoclasm: The power of wooden figures

Since the nineteenth century, the island of Nias was known for its headhunters and its material culture, both megaliths and wooden artifacts. Especially the skilfully made stone and wooden sculptures were (and remain) highly esteemed among collectors and museums in Europe or North America. The travel book of Paul Wirtz holds the enigmatic title “Nias, the island of idols.”²⁵ It is no small irony that this very combination of admiration and condemnation among missionaries contributed to the destruction of these artifacts. By the 1930s, most of these traditional sculptures had vanished from the island.²⁶

Wooden figures (*adu*) were important to native worship and were found in large numbers in all houses. The anthropomorphic figures varying in size from less than ten centimeters to more than two meters are seated, squatting or standing, as single images or vertically tied together. As part of the domestic space, the images were displayed in the interior or in front of the dwelling.²⁷ They represent two basic types, either protection against disease and harm or ancestor images to secure fertility and good fortune. Depending on their specific ritual function, the wooden images employed a certain iconography and different species of wood. Additionally, regional variations in style can be discerned.²⁸ The Nias pantheon consisted of a large and constantly increasing number of these wooden icons. In 1901, 127 different protecting deities were counted, while nearly 30 years later the number increased to 135.²⁹ Similarly, the variety of wooden ancestor figures also increased to several hundreds in the early twentieth century (see Figure 5.3).³⁰

The missionaries recognized the importance of these icons to indigenous ancestral worship, and condemned all wooden figures as an embodiment of superstition and idolatry. They believed in purifying houses by removing the images. Since the last quarter of the nineteenth-century missionaries were energetic in the destruction of these images, either personally or by persuading the Nias people to destroy them as proof of their obedient conversion or as precondition for the development of a cooperative relationship between the local aristocrats and the missionaries.³¹ Initially, the rejection of the wooden images was a form of theatre that accompanied conversion. The missionary Heinrich Sundermann (1849–1919) performed baptisms by praising God and kneeling in front of the piled wooden sculptures which would later be set alight.³² Over time, this theatrical aspect became more important and elaborate. Along with the removal of the sculptures, processions, and feasts were organized to enforce the missionaries' authority.³³ In a manner similar to local feasting practices, this spectacle included the distribution and consumption of pork, which has great ritual significance on Nias and elsewhere in Southeast Asia.³⁴ In 1901, a missionary described passionately:

We started with chants, recitation of the Ten Commandments and prayers. With hatches and knives, bigger and smaller idols were chopped off. Then I threw the first idol down the deep slope in front of the house with the words: "The Lord is God and not the idols." And then others followed, numberless, more than thousand pieces followed.³⁵

The iconoclasm of missionaries was both an act of purification and a ceremonial ritual, a dramatic spectacle accompanied by litanies and hymns. It also was a measure of missionary success; in 1930, the missionary Johannes Noll (1869–1954) proudly claimed that he had cleared a house of 2000 "idols."³⁶ In fact, the power of the images had direct influence on the missionaries that they not only banned the figures, but also fiercely damaged and destroyed them. Yet,



Figure 5.3 Wooden protecting and ancestor images displayed in a Nias house of the early twentieth century (©VEM 000908-0210).

by the ceremonial element involved in their destruction also illustrates that for the missionaries themselves, these were more than material objects. In their enthusiasm to erase irrational image worshipping practices, the missionaries performed an image cult of their own. The same trial of power to persuade converts of the superiority of the Christian faith was exemplified in 1908, when the missionary Johannes Bieger (1877–1967) cut down the sacred tree in Central Nias, which marked the place of origin for the Nias people where founder cult rituals were performed. By taking the first swing with an axe, the missionary not only proved his physical strength, but also the powers of his God over nature spirits which did not harm him.³⁷ Bieger himself believed that knocking down the magic tree could eradicate animist beliefs superstitious fear of the spirits.

A “soft iconoclasm” happened in the case of certain ancestor figures because the population was not easily convinced to destroy them.³⁸ David Morgan has used this rather poetic term when images were not physically destroyed but redeployed. Ancestor rituals were of fundamental importance to Nias society.³⁹ Ancestors were regularly honored by their descendants in ritual feasts because these spirits were believed to be able not only to contact but also to harm the living. Both the continuity of kinship beyond death, and the notion of exchange between the living and the dead were connected to the images. The images themselves were addressed by name and represented their family history. Some dated back to nine generations, meaning that they were at least 200 years old.⁴⁰ Recognizing the importance of these figures, some missionaries employed an alternate strategy of offering to bury ancestor images decently.⁴¹ This compromise behind this attempt to overcome the local resistance is significant, because by acknowledging notions of piety and obligation toward the images, the missionaries took their materiality seriously.

In addition to destruction by missionaries, the disappearance of traditional images was also advanced by the introduction of new Christian icons. Missionaries aimed to preach primarily through the study and teaching of the Bible, and as was common practice among other congregations, the Protestants on Nias used illustrated editions, which heightened the influence of instruction. Biblical images, of which the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus were most popular, entered the visual art of the island.⁴² These images visualized the Christian doctrine of eternal reward and punishment. The concept of a predictable moral world was a major motif for conversion, as it was regarded to overcome disorder and provide more security than the traditional religion.⁴³ The Nias missionaries believed that the ubiquitous fear of death, the threat of dark forces and terrifying ghosts created anxiety, uncertainty, and pressure on the locals. They may have been correct, that as the old images and their increasing number became signs of terror when their old significance faded, seen in the Christian idiom not as ancestors but as demonic. An alternative to the old affiliation became available with the Christian icons.

Furthermore, there was an economic factor: the wooden objects were expensive to keep. Due to the complexity of this image cult, the Nias people had no

direct access to these spirits but needed a specialist, the traditional priest and shaman, who served as a transmitter to the transcend world. These *ere*, as they were known locally, would choose the appropriate image for each ceremony. They also carved wooden images themselves and performed the ritual.⁴⁴ The ceremonies themselves were costly, requiring gold offerings and/or animal sacrifice, in addition to a regular payment of rice to the *ere* from each family. These costs were one main reason why the traditional priests began to lose authority as they competed with the Christian clergy who offered their services nearly for free.⁴⁵ The destruction of the demanding wooden gods was sometimes not even connected to conversion, although missionaries were still happy to claim it as a success.⁴⁶ When more and more people converted, social pressure finally, in the late 1920s, put the production of traditional wooden images to an end.⁴⁷

Cult objects become art

The so-called Ethical Policy of the Dutch colonies during the early twentieth century introduced a higher evaluation of indigenous cultures. The colonial administration in the Indonesian archipelago aimed to develop education, medical services, and other infrastructural improvements for the natives while justifying a reinforcement of imperialism.⁴⁸ As part of this new moral vision, an order was issued in 1904 to safeguard culture and monuments in the Netherlands' East Indies. In 1906, the Dutch government entrusted the education on Nias to the Rhenish Missionary Society. These changes were portended already in 1902, when a controversy arose in Germany concerning the active role of missionaries in destroying traditional artifacts on Nias.⁴⁹ The critique addressed two points. First, valuable *ethnographica* for museums were being lost. Second, a profound ethnological knowledge for missionaries was urgently needed in order to raise more awareness toward indigenous cultures. In this interdenominational discussion about conflicting claims to cultural property, it becomes obvious that ritual objects were now being regarded, at least by some, as works of art. The categories about what of native material culture is worth preserving were redrawn along values like antiquity, craftsmanship, and rarity. Later, starting in the 1920s, artists and researchers openly criticized Protestant missionaries for systematically destroying the culture of Nias "in order to then sow the seeds of Christianity upon properly prepared soil."⁵⁰ Eventually, Nias artifacts would be recognized not merely as remnants of a disappearing culture, but as artistic objects in their own right, as sculptors like Jacque Lipchitz (1891–1973) or Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988) sought in them their own new artistic solutions.⁵¹

Unlike other missionaries, Fries changed his perception toward the indigenous objects during his stay on Nias by discerning artistic qualities in the sculptures.⁵² Initially, he described the wooden images as simple, "dreadfully ugly" and crudely carved.⁵³ Wooden figures or smaller ritual objects were removed by Fries himself or at his bidding by the Nias people, as a proof of their conversion.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, he would still depict an ancestor figure of stone as an art object

placed in a decorative frame. Writing in 1910, he even esteemed the wooden sculptures and discerned their powerful appeal, the artistic skill and realism.⁵⁵ Although writing in a missionary journal, Fries here explicitly refers to criteria esteemed by the contemporary German art movement in Berlin. Indicative of his newly gained interest in the local sculpture is his drawing of the same year showing a tall *adu horö*, a forked wooden figure, from Börönadu which was intended to protect against murder or to give success in head hunting (see Figure 5.4).⁵⁶

Fries' creative role as a painter certainly raised his sensitivity to local material culture, but not all of its manifestations were considered worth saving. Fries perceived art categories from what had already become a rather conservative perspective by making the distinction between highly esteemed true art and lower craft, meaning folk art. He did not have a great interest in the latter, the local objects mainly intended for everyday use like pottery, weaving, or reed-plaiting, although these were also disappearing. In the course of the early twentieth century, these handmade domestic goods, which were mainly produced by women, were replaced by manufactured products from the West. Fries and his wife raised girls' education by providing schooling, but they did not promote the retention of traditional skills and local handicrafts. Instead, they offered courses in Bible study, as well as typically "womanly" tasks such

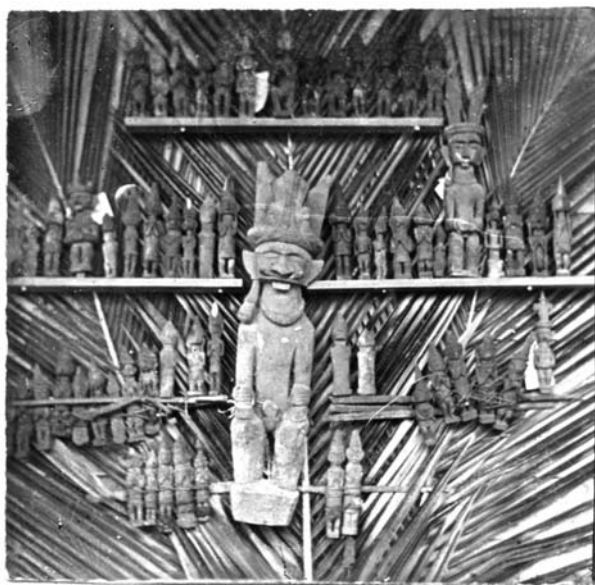


Figure 5.4 An ancestor figure of stone exemplifies Nias art drawn by Eduard Fries in 1906 (Humburg et al., 2003: fig. 29).

as nursing, and sewing.⁵⁷ Overall, neither Fries nor his fellow missionaries did object to the loss of native craft traditions.⁵⁸

At this same time, other clergymen encountered the material culture of Nias by collecting and selling tribal artifacts. With the exception of a few clergymen collectors like Dutch missionaries L. Borutta (1907–1920 on Nias) and W. L. Steinhart (from the early 1920s on the Batu Islands South of Nias), most of these collectors remained anonymous. The Ethnological Museum of Berlin has got various objects from the Rhenish Missionary Society donated by Friedrich Kramer (1873–1908 on Nias). Government officials, ethnographers, adventurous travelers also supported the export of artifacts and supplied to the international art market. As a result, the cult objects were re-evaluated in monetary terms as art and collector's pride.⁵⁹ Despite his interest in these objects, Fries himself was not a very passionate collector. Back to Germany in 1920, he only took a few souvenirs or presents with him—some small-sized ancestral figures, a few weapons, and some household items.⁶⁰

Fries did, however, support the export of Nias objects by providing them to collectors. He was often asked from Europe to send not only rare objects, but also weapons, botanical and geological specimens.⁶¹ Items from Nias were collected not only for scholarly reasons, but also because of their rarity and cultural value. The diversity of goods which were considered collectible items indicated an increasing interest in the non-Western world. Fries realized the price gap of two or three times the purchase price of *ethnographica* when sold to European collectors.⁶² Museums like the Prince Hendrik Maritime Museum in Rotterdam directly contacted missionary societies to collect ritual objects on their behalf and send them to Europe. For such an institution, the missionaries were ideal providers of first-hand material, as they had a distinct knowledge of the field. The museum reimbursed the package and transport costs only. Fries, however, supported the museums by asking his fellow missionaries on the island to search for representative artifacts:

Rare objects from Nias: As there will be opportunity enough in the coming year to convey with us a crate of adoe [wooden figures] etc., I would request that Brothers be of assistance to us so that the Museum Prins[e] Hendrik has no reason to complain of shortage of Nias idols. I am willing to collect the objects, which really have to represent a *true value*.⁶³

By emphasizing the “true value” of the requested wooden figures in this note Fries, head of the Nias mission at that time, is challenged by the idea of preserving worthy and rare objects from his island for posterity in museums. In this particular case it is not clear whether they gained a profit, but regardless of whether they did or not, the missionaries now had a further directive to obtain traditional images for museums.

Objects sent back to Europe by missionaries became the basis for ethnographic collections, and a tangible form of illustrative education. Cultural

artifacts were used to prepare future generations of missionaries for their field-work and to familiarize them with their new environment, documenting daily life in the working fields and demonstrating the efforts of their mission. Indigenous items were displayed in public as a form of advertisement and to encourage continued support and monetary funds from congregations. With the rise of mass media and mass consumerism in the early twentieth century, the exhibitionary quality of these ethnographic displays had a distinctly imperial quality, a point also raised in this volume by Nancy Stalker.⁶⁴

Fries' congregation, the Rhenish Missionary Society, in Barmen had been collecting *ethnographica* since 1832. The objects came from its missionary fields in Namibia, Tanzania, Rwanda, China, and in Indonesia, namely from the Batak region on Sumatra, from Mentawai, Enggano, and Borneo, as well as Nias. The absence of a systematic museum policy resulted in an amalgamous collection of which today about 4,200 objects are left. Many of the pieces were originally souvenirs brought back by missionaries and later donated to the museum, and not surprisingly, the range of the collection is broad and the quality of the pieces is rather diverse. The Missionary Society's ambition was not simply "to show the superstitions of the peoples" in their mission fields.⁶⁵ In 1832, the director Ludwig van Rohden stated that the intention of the museum was to proudly display its "trophies over heathendom" as well as "curiosities" and "interesting objects from the pagan world" such as idol images which were seen as "defeated enemies" a frankly imperial endeavor, complete with military rhetoric of evangelical conquest.⁶⁶ The military rhetoric of their mission highlights their ambitious claim. In 1912 and in 1914, the institution presented its objects as a propagandistic spectacle. As part of their agenda ethnographic exhibitions in the town hall or art museums were shown including numerous Nias pieces. Up to 3,000 daily visitors were recorded, an indication of the rising interest in ethnographic collections for which the missionary museum was also competing.⁶⁷ These exhibitions targeted the youth (and their parents) for moral and religious instructions. At the same time, this event gave a central place to the representations of their work abroad in order to encourage continued public support. The exhibition catalogue of 1913 distinguished eight different types of cultural objects from Nias, of which many are lost today:

- a) a big furnished room of a house with ancestral figures and arms. b) an *osale nadu* [highlighted by the author], a small temple of the gods. c) model of a sacred chair for sacrifices. d) model of two burials also serving as place for sacrifices. e) music instruments: (gong, *aramba* [big gong, highlighted by the author] and priest's drums of different sizes) f) arms (shields, spears, swords, helmets) g) clothes for men and women (for warrior, chiefs, women of the chief, priests). h) work of pupils from the missionary schools.⁶⁸

The categorization and the items displayed lend insight to what of the material culture was of interest to the clergymen. Apart from their primary focus

on objects connected to traditional worship, other objects of daily life were selected to depict a fuller ethnographic setting. These were arranged according to the European gaze: Nias was presented as a place of ancestor and spirit worship and fierce warriors tempered by a growing Christian presence.⁶⁹ The ritual sculptures kept in the collection include some very fine pieces of Nias art, allowing the missionaries to preserve what they had enthusiastically destroyed in the country of origin. The museum for tribal art had become a sanctuary of Orientalism. To use the words of Edward Said, the museum was a “simulacrum of the Orient,” reproducing knowledge and the materiality of the Orient but according to Western perceptions.⁷⁰

Stone monuments connect the living and the dead

In addition to wooden icons, Nias was also covered in stone objects, ranging from figurative statues and pillars to the oversized chairs which were erected in public spaces. Regardless of their type, all these stone monuments had an important ritual function as a medium of memorialization. In central and southern Nias, a stone chair or pillar (*dare-dare*) would be erected during the secondary burial of a chief, as a memorial above the reburied skull.⁷¹ They served as testimony of the social worth of the deceased as well as the family.

Of special interest in this context are the anthropomorphic sculptures, monolithic pillars of up to three meters, which were omnipresent in the villages. These were commonly erected on two occasions. First, a figurative stone was placed whenever a village was founded or a new chief house was built. Its placement symbolized the founding of village community. Secondly, stones were erected as part of an *owasa*, a feast of merit, for a person of considerable reputation who was honored by the granting of a new name. The stone displayed the social and cosmic order of the Nias society, in particular the perpetuation of the family lineage of the erector and their political power. The carving and erecting of each type of stone required a full set of ceremonies: several hundred slaughtered pigs, offerings like gold, and, in South Nias, even a headhunt was requested.⁷² These events involved material resources, manpower, and social support in the community. The stones were the visual manifestation of ritual order and social identity (see Figure 5.5).⁷³

Unlike the wooden images, which for missionaries had obvious connotations of idolatry, stone monuments were not seen to be intrinsically in conflict with Christianity. Stone objects were rarely buried or removed when the chief converted.⁷⁴ The missionaries, including Fries, regarded these stones as primarily socio-political, therefore secular, monuments.⁷⁵ The fundamental difference between the wooden statues and the stone objects lies in their display; the first were part of the domestic, private space whereas the second erected at open squares or in front of the houses were part of the public or semi-public realm. In line with the modernist concept of religion, which confines it to the private space, the stone artifacts were not on the iconoclastic agenda of the mission. In



Eduard Fries: Ahnenfiguren vor einem Haus in Zentralnias

Figure 5.5 Stone figure in front of a house in Hoeroena drawn by Eduard Fries in 1904.

(Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz, „Der Maler. Der Blick auf das Fremde—Asienikonographie als Weg der Annäherung,“ in Martin Humburg, Dominik Bonatz and Claus Veltmann (eds): *Im „Land der Menschen.“ Der Missionar und Maler Eduard Fries und die Insel Nias* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2003: 23–29): fig. 5.

1915, a missionary explained to young people in Germany that a stone figure on Nias demonstrates the richness and influence of the donor:

First, a lesson in idol appreciation. There is a large heavy one in front of the house, an ugly stone fellow. He is already visible from a long way off. And he is not even particularly large member of his type. There are even larger and even uglier ones. What is he doing in front of the house? Is he a guard, so that his haunting ghost is not entering the house? Actually he is only sitting there to show off. With what is he showing off? With the wealth and prestige of the owner of the house. To make such a stone figure is very costly. A person who can afford it must be very rich and gets more prestige among the people. When a stone is erected, a big feast is performed and many pigs are slaughtered.⁷⁶

Though called an “idol,” the missionary clearly does not consider it to have a religious function, and his primary concern is with the wasteful costs involved.

However, the stone figures were substantially religious. The material itself is highly symbolic, stone transmitting arguably sacred qualities of power,

hardness, persistence or irrevocability.⁷⁷ The real significance was the ritual function, especially its connection to ancestor worship in a hierarchical society with fierce competition among descent groups.⁷⁸ The ancestors provided protection, fertility and prosperity, good fortune, peace, welfare and blessings for the living, and the veneration of ancestors was the obligation of the whole family or clan.⁷⁹ For the Nias people, the erected stones offered a multitude of contexts, also serving as religious symbols in a way that answers both an individual emotional attachment and socio-political aspirations.

The apparent inconsistency in the Nias clergy's attitude of accepting the political-social act around the stone statuary, while ignoring the aspects related to ancestor worship was not always the case, and in some cases similar stone objects were condemned as idols. Among the Batak on Sumatra and the Toraja on Sulawesi, "pagan" funerary images made of stone were accepted in the Christian era because they were primarily seen as a means to emphasize bonds of an ethnic identity.⁸⁰ However, on Sumba, which is also famous for traditional stone-dragging ceremonies, the Church objected to the erection of megalithic tombs.⁸¹ The Catholics on Central Flores demolished ancestral stones but had to stop their activities thereafter.⁸²

On Nias, it was burial practices, rather than the stone objects themselves, which became the focus of controversy. Describing traditional funerary rituals, the pietistic missionaries criticized the wasteful costs of the opulent feasting during death ceremonies, which included recitations of laments and dancing.⁸³ They were bewildered by the highly emotional and the loud mourning, a habit which underlines the importance of visible social and ritual conduct of many Southeast Asian mortuary ceremonies, and contradicts the more silent death watch familiar to the Protestants. In fact, this perception draws attention to different ways of dealing with mortuary remains and the soul after death. According to the person's social strata, the corpse was either placed in a wooden coffin, tied to a wooden plank, or simply wrapped. Due to regional differences in mortuary traditions, in north and central Nias, the dead were buried in cemeteries, whereas in south Nias the corpses were placed on wooden substructures which were raised on stilts and covered by a roof.⁸⁴ The fact that the corpses were left to decay and the graves were not regularly visited contradicts the Christian significance of "eternal resting places" to be visited as places of contemplation and commemoration, and kept sacred in preparation for second coming of Christ. On Nias, the actual disposal of the physical remains of the deceased was not as significant as the transfer of the soul from the deceased to the wooden statues, which if interpreted as the physical abode of the spirit, could not be permitted by the Protestants. In contrast, the stone figures were understood simply as tomb stones, as memorials of the dead, and were completely acceptable.

A change in burial practice happened as well: The tomb with the deceased was placed close to the megalith in front of the house of the descendants. Following the argument of Dominik Bonatz the proximity of the stones to the family who had erected them was the major reason why among Christian converts also the

gravestone served to enhance public recognition by increasing prestige and status to the house owner.⁸⁵ He even goes further to assume that this closeness to the deceased could replace the disappearance of the wooden *adu*. As commemorative symbols, the erected stones were easily integrated into the Christian ritual system. Although the placement of stones originally had its own social significance, with the proximity to the family being a sign of status, when figurative stone sculptures were rewritten as grave markers, they came to delineate a Christian sepulchral space.⁸⁶ Although moving the burial site to inside the village contradicted public health policy rejecting graveyards in areas of human habitation, the colonial government did not object to this practice, prohibiting instead secondary mortuary rites and the usage of wooden substructures.

The form and iconography of the Christian gravestone or seat—both of which are made of stone or cement decorated with colorful tiles—visually recall earlier megalithic remains, and funerary iconography combines Christian and traditional Nias symbols. In the course of the twentieth century their image becomes more individualized. The graves get a more portrait-like accomplishment including the name and date of the deceased. The burial place became an important link to overcome the distance when a person has passed away. The place which is addressed—formerly the ancestor's stone, nowadays the tomb—connects the living and the dead. In Christian households, portraits of the deceased are placed on the former ancestor's altar, symbolizing the search for a continuous communication between the dead and the living (see Figure 5.6).



Figure 5.6 A Christian grave next to the megalith in front of a house in Soganwunasi, Central Nias (Dominik Bonatz/Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz, 2000).

Conclusion

When they encountered the visual culture on Nias, missionaries created new meanings, while redirecting or subverting others. In the mission history of Nias, visibility seems to have been an important key medium of interaction. The role and function of the images mentioned in the paper are diverse. There are the attitudes and illustrations which missionaries took abroad. These images contradict with those used by indigenous believers. Traditional wooden sculptures were forbidden and denounced, as opposed to the stone monuments, which were permitted and redirected so as to have a Christian meaning. The iconoclastic practices of the Protestant missionaries from the beginning of their activities until the World War II resulted in the destruction of much of the cultural heritage of Nias. The destruction of images was also fostered by sending indigenous objects back to the missionary societies where they were exhibited as counter-images in museums.

Notes

1. There are no figures available from 1916. The number of converts increased remarkably from 19,897 in 1915 to 87,780 in 1930 according to Fries' private notes in 1922. See the figures in Helga Kayser, *Aspekte des sozio-kulturellen Wandels auf Nias. Schul- und Gesundheitswesen der Rheinischen Mission 1865–1940* (Munich: Kommissionsverlag Klaus Renner, 1976): 195.
2. David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze. Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2003): 33–34.
3. Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the exhibitionary order," in Nicholas B. Dirks (ed.) *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992): 289–318; Frances Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies, 1900–1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995): 194–236; Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze*, 115–190; William B. Taylor, "Two shrines of the Cristo Renovado: Religion and peasant politics in late Colonial Mexico," *The American Historical Review* 110/4 (2006) <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/110.4/taylor.html> (accessed May 1, 2006).
4. Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz, „Der Maler. Der Blick auf das Fremde—Asienikonographie als Weg der Annäherung,“ in Martin Humburg, Dominik Bonatz and Claus Veltmann (eds) *Im „Land der Menschen.“ Der Missionar und Maler Eduard Fries und die Insel Nias* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2003): 23–29.
5. Martin Humburg, Dominik Bonatz and Claus Veltmann (eds) *Im „Land der Menschen.“ Der Missionar und Maler Eduard Fries und die Insel Nias* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2003): n. 14.
6. Rudolf Wegner, „Fünfzig Jahre Missionsarbeit auf Nias.“ *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift* May (1915): 476, 478.
7. Reimar Schefold, "Amiable savages at the doors of paradise: missionary narratives about the Mentawai Islands (Indonesia)," in Peter Kloos (ed.) *True Fiction. Artistic and scientific Representations of Reality* (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1990): 21–34 and other postcolonial writers like John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff

- (*Of Revelation and Revolution. Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, 63–165).
8. Eduard Fries, Selected papers in the circulars of the Rheinische Mission 23/1906, 17; Fries, circulars, 15/1910, 39.
 9. Fries, circulars, 1/1911, 10.
 10. Fries, circulars, 18/1905, 27; Fries, circulars, 1/1907–1908, 1; Fries, circulars, 3/1912, 18.
 11. Fries, circulars, 19/1905, 36.
 12. Marcel Mauss, „Die Gabe. Form und Funktion des Austausches in archaischen Gesellschaften,“ in Marcel Mauss (ed.) *Soziologie und Anthropologie*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1989 [1925]).
 13. Fries, circulars, 26/1906, 40–41.
 14. Fries, circulars, 29/1907, 21.
 15. Quotations are from Fries, circulars, 19/1905, 36; Fries, circulars, 26/1906, 39. Today the Bible is called *buku taroma li*, meaning “the book in which the spoken word has found its seat/place” (communication with J. M. Hämmerle, 2006).
 16. Fries (circulars, 32/1907, 44) describes his first visit to Central Nias of May 9, 1904.
 17. Fries, circulars, 19/1905, 33; Fries, circulars, 22/1905, 10.
 18. Fries, circulars, 17/1904, 22–23.
 19. Fries, circulars, 3/1908, 21.
 20. Kayser, *Aspekte*, 1976, 194.
 21. Fries’ passage from 1907, which implies that Fries was one of the less dogmatic figures on Nias, was cited by musicologist Jaap Kunst (*Indonesian Music and Dance. Traditional Music and its Interaction with the West. A Compilation of Articles* (1934–1952) originally published in Dutch, with biographical Essays by Ernst Heins, Elisabeth den Otter, Felix van Lamsweerde (Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute, 1994, 62)) in his lecture held at a Dutch missionary school in 1946 (Humburg et al., *Im „Land der Menschen,“* 2003, 100).
 22. Fries, circulars, 1/1912, 2.
 23. Gouda, *Dutch Culture*, 131.
 24. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1980 [1921]): 308.
 25. Otto Wirz, *Nias, die Insel der Götzen* (Zürich/Leipzig: Orell Füssli, 1929).
 26. Jerome Feldman, “The adaptation of indigenous forms to western taste. The case of Nias,” in Paul Michael Taylor (ed.) *Fragile Traditions. Indonesian Art in Jeopardy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994): 43 and Laurens Bakker, “At Nias or from Nias? Museum displays, national images and locality in a West Indonesian Island,” in *Performing Objects. Museums, Material Culture and Performance in South-east Asia* (London: The Horniman Museum, 2004): 56 assume that most of the wooden images were already destroyed in the 1920s. Referring to the missionaries’ statements in this article this date seems too early.
 27. Wooden figures were placed only in public places for certain occasions e.g., in the case of an epidemic illness or for certain ancestor worshipping ceremonies (Fries, circulars, 4/1909, 30; Anonymous, “Von einem goldenen Jubiläum. Warum die Mission auf Nias den Boden so hart fand.“ *Der kleine Missionsfreund* 9/61 (1915): 134).
 28. Jerome Feldman, “Nias and its traditional sculptures,” in Jerome Feldman et al. (eds) *Volkenkundig Museum Nusantara Delft: Nias. Tribal Treasures. Cosmic Reflections in Stone, Wood and Gold* (Delft: Volkenkundig Museum Nusantara, 1990): 21–44.

29. A. Fehr, *Der Niasser im Leben und Sterben* (Barmen: Missionshaus, 1901): 49; Johannes Noll, „Die ersten Heidentaufen an der ehemaligen Stätte der Entstehung des niassischen Götzendienstes.“ *Berichte der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft* (1930): 303.
30. Ag. Møller, *Beitrag zur Beleuchtung des religiösen Lebens der Niasser* (Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie 32, 1934): 127.
31. Friedrich Kramer, „Der Götzendienst der Niasser.“ *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 33 (1890): 473, 500; Fehr, *Der Niasser*, 14, 33, 48; Ulrich Rottschäfer, *Heinrich Rabeneck 1875–1939: Die Lebensgeschichte des Missionars aus Hiddenhausen* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1989): 25.
32. Heinrich Sundermann, „Die Insel Nias und die Mission daselbst.“ *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift* 12 (1885): 287.
33. August Lett, „Die falschen Götzen macht zu Spott.“ *Der kleine Missionsfreund* 1 (1892): 28–30.
34. Arlette Ziegler, „Festive areas. Territories and feasts in the South of Nias,” in Jerome Feldman et al. (eds) *Nias. Tribal Treasures. Cosmic Reflections in Stone, Wood and Gold* (Delft: Volkenkundig Museum Nusantara, 1990): 79–106.
35. O. Rudersdorf, *Berichte der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft* 59/5 (1902): 139–140.
36. Noll, „Die ersten Heidentaufen,” 303.
37. Johannes N. Bieger, *Erlebnisse eines Missionars in 12jähriger Arbeit auf Nias und Sumatra* (Barmen: Missionshaus, 1916): 45–48.
38. The rejection of ancestor worship was a highly problematic field of practical importance for many other missionaries. Conflicts arose, for example, with the Toraja on Sulawesi (T. A. Volkman, „Mortuary Tourism in Tana Toraja,” in Rita Smith Kipp (ed.) *Indonesian Religions in Transition, Papers from the 10th Annual Indonesian Studies Conference, held at Ohio University in August 1982* (Tucson, Ariz.: The University of Arizona Press, 1987, 163), among the Jesuits in China (Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1993, n. 24), and the missionaries in Central Flores.
39. Morgan, *The sacred Gaze*, 129.
40. Kramer, „Der Götzendienst,” 74.
41. Kramer, „Der Götzendienst,” 72; August Lett, *Im Dienst des Evangeliums auf der Westküste von Nias*, vol. b: Aus den Tagen der Anfänge, 1901, 55–57.
42. According to Heinrich Sundermann („Die Insel,” 283). See further investigations on the influence of the Catholics on visual arts after 1939 (Thomas M. Manhart, „A song for Lowalangi. The Interculturation of Catholic; Mission and Nias Traditional Arts with special Respect to Music.” Ph.D. thesis, National University of Singapore, 2004: Ch. 4.2).
43. Religion as a means to overcome disorder, as mentioned by Clifford Geertz, was recently recaptured (Asad, *Genealogies*, 65; Clifford Geertz, „Religion als kulturelles System,” in Clifford Geertz (ed.) *Dichte Beschreibung. Beiträge zum Verstehen kultureller Systeme* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995 [1966]): 61–63; Karel A. Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia. A documented History 1808–1900* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2003): 221–222.
44. August Lett, *Im Dienst des Evangeliums auf der Westküste von Nias*, vol. c: Ernste und heitere Erlebnisse (Barmen: Missionshaus, 1901): 37–42; Fehr, *Die Niasser*, 48–51; Møller, „Beitrag,” 122–123.
45. Each Christian family was required to pay only one Gulden annually, an amount that was estimated to be nominal and could be redeemed (Eduard Fries, „Gemeindeerziehung und Kirchenzucht.“ *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift* 11 (1913): 495).

46. Sundermann („Die Insel,” 180, n. 2; Kramer, „Der Götzendienst,” 500; Rudolf Wegner, *Die Erweckungsbewegung auf Nias* (Barmen: Missionshaus, 1924): 35.
47. Reinhold Mittersackschmöller (Zum Problem der Souvenir- und Touristenkunst aus ethnologischer Sicht. Fallbeispiel Nias/Indonesien. Ph.D. thesis, Universität Wien, 1988, 248) cites a passage from 1928 during which traditional figures became a symbol of shame.
48. Gouda, *Dutch Culture*.
49. H. S. „Missionsvandalismus auf Nias.” *Globus. Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde* 11 (1902): 179; Mundle, G. „Zur Nachricht „Missionsvandalismus auf Nias.”“ *Globus. Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde* LXXXII/1 (1902): 280. The abbreviations H. S. may belong to the missionary Heinrich, Sundermann who worked from 1876 to 1910 on Nias.
50. Citation from Jaap Kunst (Indonesian Music, 1994: 62). See also statements in the public press by the Dutch artist Rudolf Bonnet in 1931 (Raymond Corbey, „Iconoclasm and conversion. Ritual riddance on the Christian frontier in framing Indonesian realities,” in Peter J. N. Nas, Gerard A. Persoon and Rivke Jaffe (eds) *Essays in Symbolic Anthropology in Honour of Reimar Schefold* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2003, 119) or Jaap Kunst in 1939 (Music in Nias. *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie* 38 (1939): 2, n. 9) and Peter Suzuki in 1959 and 1973 (The Religious System and Culture of Nias, Indonesia. Ph.D. thesis, University of Leiden. S’Gravenhagen: Excelsior, 1959, iii; „Autochthonous states of Nias, Indonesia, extinct or extant.” *Bulletin of the International Committee on urgent anthropological ethnological Research* 15 (1973): 29). More generally: Gouda, *Dutch Culture*, 258, n.159.
51. Yoshiko Yamamoto provided these useful references (personal communication, 2005).
52. The early German missionaries rarely saw an aesthetic appeal of the local material culture. The exceptions were Heinrich Sundermann or August Lett (Sundermann 1891, 371; August Lett, *Im Dienst des Evangeliums auf der Westküste von Nias*, vol. a: Ein Vorbereitungs- und Reisejahr, 1901, 65, 73–74).
53. Fries, circulars, 1904, 389; Fries, circulars, 18/1906, 29.
54. Fries, circulars, 29/1907, 18–19; Fries, circulars, 1938, 11, 13; Johannes Warneck, *Eduard Fries. Das Leben eines deutschen Missionars* (Barmen: Missionshaus, 1949): 53; Johannes Maria Hämmerle, *Nias—eine eigene Welt, Sagen, Mythen, Überlieferungen* (Sankt Augustin: Academia, 1999): 330.
55. Referring to an account of the late 1910, which was published in the circular 1/Feb. (8) in 1911 (no page number).
56. Dominik Bonatz, „Niassisches Leben (damals und heute),“ in Humburg Martin, Dominik Bonatz and Claus Veltmann (eds) *Im „Land der Menschen.” er Missionar und Maler Eduard Fries und die Insel Nias* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2003): fig. 6.
57. Fries, circulars, 23/1906, 16.
58. At the same time, other socio-political trends such as the loss of traditional feasting, the fading of former aristocratic prestige symbols or changing economic activities reinforced the decline of traditional handicrafts as has been described for South Nias. Yoshiko Yamamoto, „Craftsmanship amidst change in Southern Nias,” in Tan Chee-Beng (ed.) *Sociocultural Change, Development and indigenous Peoples* (Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific, Institute of Pacific Studies, 1997): 115–144.
59. Reimar Schefold and Han F. Vermeulen (eds), *Treasure Hunting? Collectors and Collections of Indonesian Artefacts* (Leiden: Universiteit Leiden, 2002).

60. These objects are still kept in his family, to whom, in particular Dr Martin Humburg, I owe him special thanks for providing me with unpublished material and information.
61. Humburg et al., *Im „Land der Menschen,”* 2003, 22, n. 14.
62. Fries, circulars, 2/1912, 7.
63. Fries, circulars, 18, 8.10.1919, RMG 1.408 (filed at the Vereinigte Mission Wuppertal-Barmen).
64. Mitchell, *Orientalism*, 1992; Bakker, At Nias.
65. Hetty Nooy-Palm, “Treasure hunters in the field. Collecting ethnographic artefacts in the Netherlands East Indies (1750–1940),” in Reimar Schefold and Han F. Vermeulen (eds) *Treasure Hunting? Collectors and Collections of Indonesian Artefacts* (Leiden: Universiteit Leiden, 2002): 53.
66. Reprinted in L. von Rohden, *Geschichte der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft* (Barmen: J.F. Steinhaus, 1856): 30; *Missions-Blatt* (21/Nov. 1860: no page number). I appreciate the assistance of Wolfgang Apelt, Julia Besten, and Folke Obermark-Stiller of the Vereinigte Evangelische Mission who gave me access to unpublished sources. The collection history of the museum is not yet written.
67. G. Mundle, *Wie es in Düsseldorf auf der Missionsausstellung war. Der kleine Missionsfreund* 7 (1914): 99.
68. 1913, RMG 1.212.
69. The explanation of a “temple” is misleading as it can be a place or a seat either made of wood or stone on which ancestor figures were placed, prayer, and sacrifices were performed (personal communication with J. M. Hämmerle, 2006).
70. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1995): 166.
71. Hämmerle, *Nias*, 379.
72. Ziegler, „Festive areas,” 84–85; Hämmerle, *Nias*, 350.
73. Dominik Bonatz, „Wandel einer Megalithkultur im 20. Jahrhundert (Nias/Indonesien).“ *Anthropos* 96 (2001): 1–14; Dominik Bonatz, “Megaliths on Nias: The retention of identity.” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 30/88 (2002): 253–276.
74. A stone was removed when the chief of Dahana/Tumöri converted (Heinrich Sundermann, „Die Mission auf der Insel Nias von 1884–1897.“ *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift* 25 (1898): 457). A flat stone which was used during a tiger ritual was removed in Onohondrö (personal communication with J. M. Hämmerle, 2005).
75. Heinrich Sundermann, „Der Kultus der Niasser.” *Globus. Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde* 24 (1891): 371; Thomas (1892, 4–5); See Fries’ note to his drawing (Bonatz, „Niassisches Leben,” 2003: fig. 10).
76. Anonymous, “Von einem goldenen Jubiläum. Warum die Mission auf Nias den Boden so hart fand.” *Der kleine Missionsfreund* 9/61 (1915): 131–132.
77. Mircea Eliade, *Das Heilige und das Profane. Vom Wesen des Religiösen* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990 [1957]): 137.
78. There is controversy over whether ancestral cults were connected to the stone monuments or whether they were erected only for the living. Arlette Ziegler and Alain Viaro deny any connection between ancestral cults and the stones. Arlette Ziegler and Alain Viaro, “Stones of power: Statuary and Megalithism in Nias,” in Jean Paul Barbier (ed.) *Messages in Stone. Statues and Sculptures from tribal Indonesia in the Collections of the Barbier-Mueller Museum* (Geneva/Milan: SKIRA, 1998, 44–48, 70–72). Others (Johannes Pieter Kleiweg de Zwaan, *Die Insel Nias bei Sumatra. Untersuchungen derselben*. Den Haag: Matinus Nijhoff, 2 vols, 1913, 23; Hämmerle, *Nias*, 323–332; Bonatz, 259–263) clearly connect ancestor

- rituals with stone monuments. This is also supported by the missionaries (Bieger, *Erlebnisse*, 27).
79. Fehr, *Die Niasser*, 14; Fries, circulars, 1908, 78–79; Hämmerle, *Nias*, 323–332.
 80. Edward M. Bruner, “Megaliths, migration and the segmented self,” in Rainer Carle (ed.) *Cultures and Societies of North Sumatra* (Berlin/Hamburg: Reimer, 1987): 133–150; Reimar Schefold, “Hearthless house and painted concrete: Aspects of ethnicity among Sa’dan Toraja and Toba Batak (Indonesia),” in Philip Quarles Van Ufford and Matthew Schoffeleers (eds) *Religion & Development Towards an Integrated Approach* (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1988): 231–246.
 81. J. A. Hoskins, “Entering the bitter house: Spirit worship and conversion in West Sumba,” in Rita Smith Kipp (ed.) *Indonesian Religions in Transition, Papers from the 10th Annual Indonesian Studies Conference*, held at Ohio University in August 1982 (Tucson, Ariz.: The University of Arizona Press, 1987): 147–148.
 82. Steenbrink, *Catholics*, 222–223.
 83. Heinrich Sundermann, „Verderbliche Sitten auf Nias.“ *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift* 25 (1898, 177–178; Sundermann, „Die Mission,“ 1898, 470); Fries, circulars, 1/1907–1908, 1–4.
 84. During the first four days of mortuary ceremonies, the burial place was visited to leave food for the dead. Burial places, which were most often located outside of the villages, were avoided by the locals who feared the haunting soul of the deceased. Different kinds of soul-transfer ceremonies have been recorded (Feldman, *Nias*, 32–33). The preparation of a wooden coffin well before death was considered as a symbol of status, see, Carl Benjamin Hermann Baron von Rosenberg, *Der Malayische Archipel. Land und Leute in Schilderungen gesammelt während eines dreisigjährigen Aufenthalts in den Kolonien* (Leipzig): fig. 157; J. W. Thomas, „Drei Jahre in Südnias—Erlebnisse. Barmen: Missionshaus, 1892.“ *Rheinische Missions-Traktate* 46: 13; Fehr, *Die Niasser*, 49, 53–56; Eduard Fries, „Das „Kopensnellen“ auf Nias.“ *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift* 2 (1908): 78, 87; Mittersackschmöller, „Zum Problem,“ 136–138; Kleiweg de Zwaan, *Die Insel*, 18–23; Möller, „Beitrag,“ 165).
 85. Bonatz, „Wandel,“ 116; Bonatz, „Megaliths,“ 264, figs. 6, 11).
 86. In the same way certain plants which symbolized the dead person were formerly not connected to the burial site but to any piece of land to remember the deceased (Kleiweg de Zwaan, *Die Insel*, 22; Hämmerle, *Nias*, 329). Later they specifically mark the Christian graves.

6

The Virgin Heads South: Northern Catholic Refugees and their Clergy in South Vietnam, 1954–1964

Peter Hansen

This chapter examines the concept of religious authority as practised amongst Catholic parish communities from northern Vietnam when transplanted into the South as a consequence of the North–South transmigration of 1954–1955. Here, priest-leaders mandated by both the Catholic hierarchy and their refugee parishioners found themselves exercising authority in a variety of manners which would push the parameters of clerical leadership as ordinarily understood in a Catholic context. They did so in a manner consistent with their traditional role as socio-political, as well as religious leaders, in northern Vietnamese Catholic communities. Yet this role so differed from that of clergy in the southern Vietnamese Church that it served to further differentiate the northern Catholics from their southern counterparts.

The Accords reached at the end of the Geneva Conference on Indochina of May–July 1954 provided for the temporary partition of Vietnam between North and South at the seventeenth parallel.¹ The North was ceded to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam under the rule of Hồ Chí Minh and the Việt Minh, while leadership in the southern Associated State of Vietnam was quickly assumed by the Catholic, American-sponsored Ngô Đình Diệm.²

Article 14 of these accords provided for free movement between the northern and southern regions for a period of 300 days.³ By the end of that period, some 810,000 residents of the North had taken the opportunity to move to the South.⁴ Over 75 percent of these refugees were Roman Catholics, drawn mainly, although not exclusively, from the two dioceses with the heaviest concentration of Catholics, Phát Diệm (in Ninh Bình province) and Bùi Chu (in Nam Định province).⁵ The bishops of these two dioceses, Thaddeus Lê Hữu Từ, and Pierre Phạm Ngọc Chi, had since the late 1940s been implacable opponents of the Việt Minh. Each had maintained a self-defence militia which had engaged in frequent combat with Việt Minh forces, many of whom in turn regarded the Vietnamese Catholic Church as a colonialist and anti-nationalist entity. Many northern Catholics had fought not only for these militia, but also for the French army. Consequently, when it became clear that the Việt Minh insurgency had

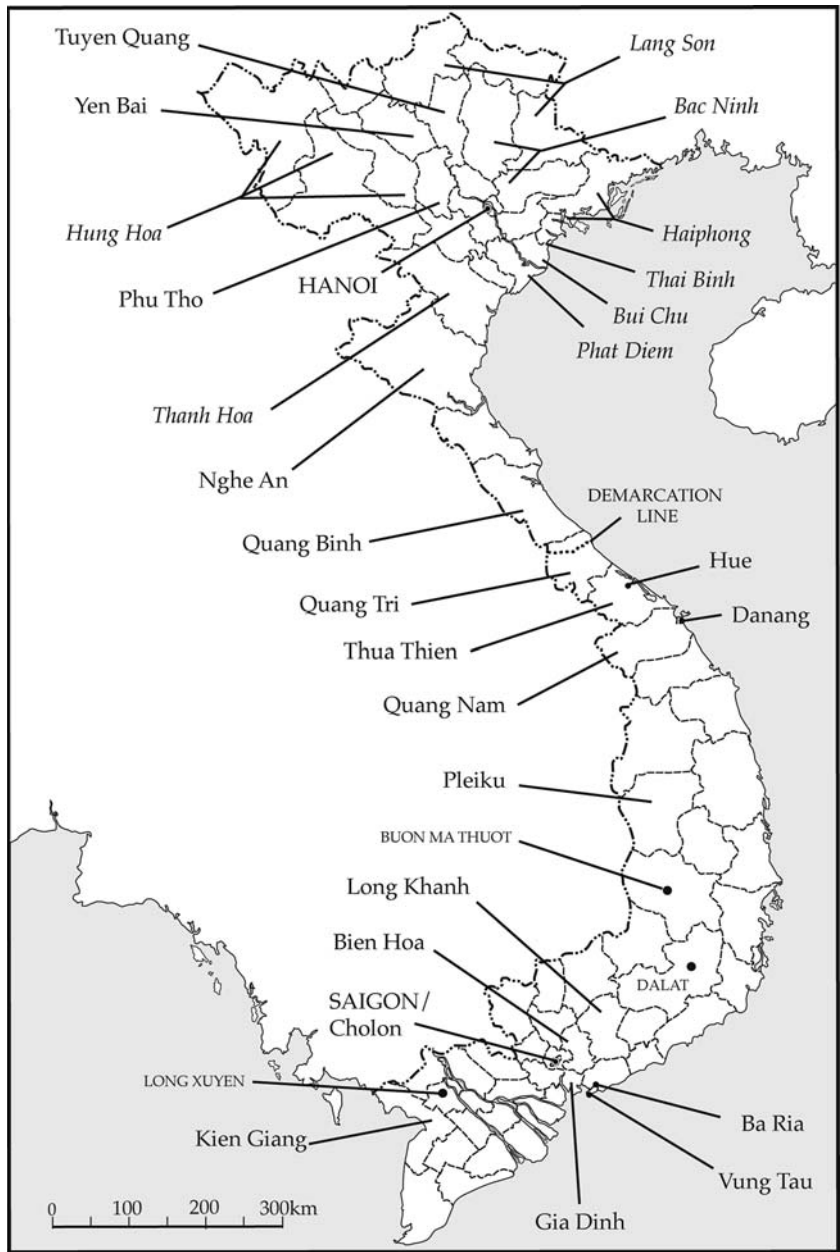


Figure 6.1 North and South Vietnam showing provincial boundaries. Names in italics refer to approximate location of Catholic dioceses.

succeeded in the North, many Catholics, fearing reprisals, fled in the face of the oncoming Việt Minh forces.⁶ While this process had begun prior to the implementation of the Geneva Accords, the protection given by them—though far from complete—turned the flow of northern refugees into a torrent.

The resettlement of these refugees, and their integration into southern society, became one of the most pressing initial tasks not only for the Diệm regime, but also for the Catholic Church.⁷ Their transmigration to the South became known as the Great Transmigration (*Cuộc Đại Di Cư*), while the refugees themselves became known as “the northern refugees from ‘fifty-four’” (*Bắc Di Cư Năm Mười Tư*). This vast and sudden influx pushed the financial and logistical resources of the Diệm government to their limit. At the same time, the Catholic Church in the South also had to deal with the many issues that arose from the need to assimilate a northern Catholic cohort into the smaller southern Church. At the time of partition in 1954, there were approximately 1,900,000 Catholics in Vietnam, of whom only 520,000, or 27.4 percent, lived in the southern area. By the end of the transmigration, some 1,170,000 (61.6 percent) lived beneath the seventeenth parallel.⁸

The difficulties in digesting the sheer numbers of Catholic *bắc di cư* were further compounded by the fact that they were heirs to a quite different church to that which had grown up in the South. Whereas southern Catholics were largely accustomed to living in peaceful coexistence in mixed communities with non-Catholic neighbours, many of their northern co-religionists—particularly those from Phát Diệm and Bùi Chu dioceses—were accustomed to living in all-Catholic sub-parishes (*họ đạo*), isolated from what they perceived to be a threatening, non-Catholic world beyond. In contrast, most southern Catholics could draw a ready line of demarcation between their spiritual and temporal/civic lives; these aspects of existence often became conflated for residents of the northern *họ đạo*. And, whilst southern Catholics acknowledged they were subject to clerical leadership in the spiritual and ecclesiastical realms alone, clerical leadership in many northern Catholic *họ đạo* sometimes took on aspects of an all-encompassing theocracy.

Of course, there was also much that, as Vietnamese Catholics, they shared together, and which would have been readily recognizable to northerner and southerner alike, in such areas of religious life as liturgy, doctrine, and ecclesiastical hierarchy. And yet, there were sufficient dissonances between northern and southern Vietnamese Catholicism that, when the historical and political vicissitudes of the 1954–1955 transmigration threw a significant portion of the northern Church into immediate cohabitation with its southern counterpart, those dissonances became an occasional inhibitor to seamless assimilation, and a frequent source of mutual incomprehension. The northern clergy were thus confronted with the need to guide their parishioners into integration and coexistence with surrounding southern society, while at the same time retaining communal cohesion and a distinctive northern identity. Their traditional role of communal leadership beyond the spiritual and ecclesiastical realm within

northern Catholic parishes left them the pre-eminent, if not sole candidates, to undertake this task.

The northern and southern Churches before 1954

Anti-Catholic persecutions, often sponsored by the Nguyễn monarchs from Minh Mang (1820–1841) onwards, threatened Catholic communities throughout Vietnam during much of the nineteenth century. Such persecutions in the south, while occasionally very fierce and destructive, were more localized than in the north. Moreover, the persecution of Catholics in the south effectively ended with the advent of French colonialism by 1867, whereas in the north, it continued until the Protect the King (*Cần Vương*) Movement petered out in the 1880s.⁹

It was in response both to this external threat, and in response to the triumphalist and exclusionary mood of the universal Catholic Church in the late nineteenth century, that the French Bishops in the north moved to further consolidate and isolate the Catholic communities under their jurisdiction. In August 1893, the Bishop of Hanoi, Pierre-Marie Gendreau, sent a pastoral letter to Catholics in the North–West Province instructing them to establish a Catholic *giáp* (a form of mutual assistance confraternity) in their locality, and to separate themselves from non-Catholics.¹⁰ Before the establishment of the *giáp*, the Catholic believers were scattered throughout the non-Catholic population.¹¹ But after the *giáp* was formed, the Catholics came together to reside and earn a living together in a village or hamlet. The aim of this aggregation was to create small communities living in proximity to each other, so that the laity could provide mutual physical protection, support each other to keep the faith, while avoiding contact with traditional religions and beliefs.¹² In contrast, southern Catholics were far fewer, less likely to live in concentrations, and thus impossible to organize into exclusionary *giáp*.

Within the micro-societies of the northern Catholic heartland, the line of demarcation between ecclesiastical and civil leadership began to blur. The organizational structures used by the missionary Church to administer parishes proved readily adaptable to Vietnamese social and administrative institutions. Indeed, the offices of lay leadership within a parish so paralleled those of the traditional Vietnamese village that there was often a convergence between civil and parochial office within Catholic settlements. This is not to say that the parish or sub-parish (*họ*) and the village (*làng*) were regarded as the same juridical entity; to the contrary, both church and state adamantly maintained the importance of their distinctiveness. When Catholic villagers were aggregated at the direction of their church, excluding all or most non-Catholics from their midst, the effect was to create a multitude of small theocracies under the leadership of parish clergy. Catholicism became these villages' principal *raison d'être*. The church building became the focal point of the village, replacing the communal house (*đình*). Catholic festivals, drawn largely from the universal Roman Calendar, supplanted or appropriated many local festivals. Participation in local

Catholic liturgies and devotional practices similarly supplanted the traditional rites devoted to local deities or civic heroes.

Of course, the manifestations of missionary Catholicism also applied to the more scattered, sparsely settled Catholics in the south. Catholics living in mixed communities, or as minorities amongst non-Catholics (*lương*), were also called on by their Church to participate in Catholic practices, and abjure certain non-Catholic practices, particularly pertaining to prayer and ritual. Yet their situation was fundamentally different to that of their co-religionists in the more closed Catholic micro-societies in the north, and their faith, while no less strongly held, was less pervasive in its non-spiritual implications. Similarly, unlike their northern co-religionists, they did not view the non-Catholic Vietnamese society around them as a omnipresent source of threat, persecution, and heresy.

The northern clergy played a much wider role than their southern counterparts. In the *họ đạo* of the north, the convergence of civic, economic, and religious society (the lack of exposure to external, non-Catholic influences, including the weak presence of central government authority within the village,) and the parallel of village and parish organizational structures meant that whoever held authority within the parish was likely to hold it within the village. And in a northern Catholic village, the figure of authority *in excelsis* was the parish priest. Consequently, the priests in the Northern *họ đạo* often took on the role of civic leaders, organizing village activities, including agricultural production, land distribution, and other economic activities. They acted as arbitrators of disputes, mediators with colonial authorities, organizers of self-defence, and invokers of French protection against hostile *lương* from the outside world. Their self-appointed jurisdiction took them well beyond the realm of spiritual and ecclesiastical leadership, and into that of secular chiefdom.

Few southern Catholics saw this as a role for their clergy; thus when the de facto partitioning of the country brought a flood of their northern co-religionists into their midst, they brought to this enforced relationship a very different understanding of what it meant to be Catholic, what it meant to deal with non-Catholics, and especially what it meant to be subject to clerical leadership. The extent of this difference served to illustrate that the separate development of northern and southern Churches arose not from institutional or universalized sources of Catholic authority, but rather from localized traditions of religious organization and leadership.

The transmigration

The movement of refugees from the Northern Catholic heartland of Phát Diệm and Bùi Chu began prior to the signing of the Geneva Accords. The early coalition governments of Hồ Chí Minh, which had made some effort to accommodate Catholics, had by 1949 unravelled as the Việt Minh asserted their dominance.¹³ This, together with the hardening attitude within the universal Church to communism, meant that even before 1954, there was an open enmity

between the Việt Minh and the Vietnamese Catholic hierarchy, both missionary and local.

In Phát Diệm and Bùi Chu, the self-defence forces (*lực lượng Tự Vệ*) maintained by Bishops Từ and Chi, had by mid-1954 succumbed to the resurgent Việt Minh Forces.¹⁴ In Military District IV (*Liên Khu Vực IV*), based around the North Central provinces of Nghệ An, Quảng Bình, and Quảng Trị, the Catholic community had suffered considerably under local Việt Minh rule.¹⁵ As a consequence of these negative experiences, the movement of Catholics out of the area subject to Việt Minh insurgency, and into the area under continued French control, particularly the cities of Hanoi and Haiphong and the corridor between them, began immediately after the Việt Minh victory at Điện Biên Phủ.¹⁶ By the end of 1955, some 887,861 *bắc di cư* had headed south of the seventeenth parallel.¹⁷

The dioceses of Phát Diệm and Bùi Chu are both situated just to the south of the Hanoi-Haiphong corridor, making the journey to the embarkation points a relatively easy one. But refugees also poured in from more distant dioceses; from Bắc Ninh, Hưng Hóa, Lang Sơn, Thái Bình, and Thanh Hóa. From Hanoi, they were evacuated by airlift, and from Haiphong, by vessels of the French and U.S. navies.¹⁸ Those fleeing from the North Central region left largely on foot or by small boat, and resettled in the provinces immediately to the South of the seventeenth parallel, namely Quảng Trị, Thừa Thiên-Huế, and Quảng Nam-Đà Nẵng.¹⁹

Although some commentators have placed great emphasis on the “psywar” activities of Colonel Edward Lansdale and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in spreading rumours such as “the Virgin [Mary] has headed South”, it was, instead, the Catholic clergy, acting as community leaders in Northern Catholic villages, who were most often the determining factor as to whether the residents of a given parish would stay or leave.²⁰ Some priests advised the community at a Sunday Mass that they were leaving for the South that week, with the expectation that the community would naturally follow.²¹ The fact that so many left *en masse* at the behest of their parish priests gave an indication of the level of clerical authority vested in them by their communities, authority which would be redefined and utilized in the post-migration setting.

Resettlement

Resettlement organizations

The structures established by the southern Church and state to receive and resettle the *bắc di cư* ceded significant authority to the northern clergy, replicating the social and ecclesiastical paradigms of the North. These factors significantly shaped the *bắc di cư* experience. On arrival in the South, the *bắc di cư* were offered assistance by an amalgam of government and non-government agencies who were given the task of ensuring their expeditious and successful resettlement. Diệm, whose government had only been established in June 1954,

appointed Bùi Văn Lương, a southern Catholic, as Commissioner for Refugees (*Phủ Tổng Ủy Di Cư Tỵ Nạn*, henceforth as PTUDCTN).²² The PTUDCTN was responsible both for the registration and subsidization of the *bắc di cư*, and also for the administration of the resettlement centres, where the majority resided.²³ The PTUDCTN was himself aided in resettlement operations by the United States Operations Mission (USOM), an organ of the U.S. State Department. USOM, which had a very significant presence in the Southern Republic, took a lead role in advising the Diệm administration on refugee affairs, and in providing logistical support.²⁴ USOM was the principal conduit for more than \$58 million which the U.S. government poured into the Republic of Vietnam, much of which was taken up in refugee resettlement and relief.²⁵

The U.S. government was not the only source of public monies; many non-government organizations also channelled private funds into the South generally, and into refugee resettlement in particular. By far the largest amongst them was the U.S. Catholic Relief Services (CRS).²⁶ CRS took a highly participatory role in refugee resettlement; its in-country leader in Vietnam, Bishop Joseph Harnett, was regularly consulted by Diệm and Lương.²⁷ Under the patronage of Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York, CRS was a substantial contributor of funds to the refugee resettlement effort, and also helped to administer USOM-funded projects.²⁸

Harnett and CRS also provided a vital point of overseas contact with the Vietnamese Catholic Church, which claimed adherence of more than 75 percent of the *bắc di cư*.²⁹ Significantly, very little of that contact was with the Bishops of the territorial or “indigenous” Church hierarchy in South Vietnam.³⁰ Instead, Harnett liaised almost exclusively with Bishop Phạm Ngọc Chi. No longer able to exercise Episcopal jurisdiction within Bùi Chu diocese, Chi was granted two positions which were both central to refugee resettlement.³¹ The first was as the Bishop Responsible for Refugees (*Giám Mục Phụ Trách Giáo Dân Di Cư*). This position gave Chi canonical jurisdiction over all *bắc di cư* clergy, a jurisdiction which would normally have been exercised by the bishop of the territorial diocese.

Second, the Apostolic Delegate to Hanoi, Msgr. John Dooley, appointed Chi as head of the Resettlement Assistance Committee (*Ủy Ban Hỗ Trợ Định Cư*, henceforth as UBHTDC), a committee of ten priests, representing the ten northern dioceses in exile, mandated to supervise the Church’s involvement in refugee resettlement, and oversee the clerical “spiritual leaders” in the resettlement camps. These “spiritual leaders” (*lãnh đạo tinh thần*), who had usually been the parish priest of their compatriots in the North, had the responsibility to assess and choose places which would be suitable for the resettlement of their parishioners. On arrival at the place granted, the priest had to assume the role of camp director, supervising construction and organizing security, as well as organizing daily life in the camp, and distributing to families the land, subsidy monies, and goods supplied by the Commissioner or by charitable organizations.

Outside of this, the camp directors regularly liaised with the UBHTDC, the PTUDCTN, and with various international charitable organizations.

On April 10, 1956, as the immediate resettlement phase concluded, Chi sent a letter to the priest-directors, requesting that they hand over administrative powers to committees established by residents of the camps, and to return instead to duties of an entirely spiritual nature, pertaining solely to religion. In accordance with this principle, Chi's Committee saw for itself that its mission was effectively completed.³²

The Committee had access to a substantial funding base of more than \$12 million from Catholic churches overseas.³³ This, together with the fact that the vast majority of the *bắc di cư* were subject to his ecclesiastical control, greatly assisted the prestige and influence of Chi and his Committee. Like Bishop Harnett, Bishop Chi was a regular correspondent with Bùi Văn Lương, and he or one of his delegates sat on many working committees and investigatory delegations, and not only in matters pertaining to religion.³⁴

The Committee also performed the vital role of providing camp leadership through allowing the *bắc di cư* clergy to act as "spiritual leaders"—which in effect meant overall leaders—within the resettlement camps. As will be seen, this had a profound influence on the nature of the *bắc di cư* experience within their new and largely alien surrounds.

Phases of resettlement

The Diệm government actively discouraged the dispersal of *bắc di cư* into the general southern population, seeking instead to settle the northern communities as distinct entities, often in areas away from high concentrations of the local population (Biên Hòa province, for example, had been quite lightly populated until the arrival of the *bắc di cư*). The government's motivations evolved over time. Initially, they had been worried about adverse reactions from the "indigenous" southern population if housing, employment and educational opportunities and the like, were swamped by a tide of northern *arrivistes*. Even when the administration of the resettlement centres was integrated into local and provincial governments at the end of 1957, the population of the centres remained largely distinct undispersed concentrations of northern Catholics. Just as they had before the Transmigration, northern Catholics continued to live within distinct communities, largely separated from the surrounding non-Catholic world, with a commensurately blurred distinction between religious and civic life. It is little wonder then, that the northern style of community hierarchy—a core of lay figures mixing both parochial and secular functions, presided over by a powerful and authoritative clerical leadership—would also emerge in their new circumstances in the South.

Resettlement of the refugees had three distinct phases. The first phase, during the latter half of 1954, saw a flow of northern refugees so great that the nascent Diệm regime was overwhelmed by the logistical problems which the new arrivals posed. During this phase, most of those evacuated from Hanoi and Haiphong

and were housed in 42 reception stations (*trạm tiếp-cứu*) near the points of disembarkation in Saigon, Cholon, and Vũng Tàu.³⁵ Most were kept under canvas or in existing public facilities such as schools, army barracks, churches, parks, and other open grounds.³⁶ This was not a viable long-term solution. The owners of the facilities soon required their return to use for their original purposes; moreover, the lack of proper infrastructure meant that these holding camps were prone to both disease and fire.³⁷

In the second phase, beginning in early 1955, the majority of the Saigon, Cholon, and Vũng Tàu-based refugees were moved to more permanent settlements adjoining these urban centres, the highest concentrations being in the areas to the immediate north of Saigon, namely Biên Hòa, Long Khánh, Gia Định, and Bà Rịa. These new resettlement camps were segregated in three aspects.³⁸ First, they were largely segregated from the local southern population. Most were located in thinly populated areas, where disruption to local landholding and agricultural activity was minimal, and local interests could remain largely unthreatened.³⁹ During the term of the PTUDCTN, the permission of camp administrators was required before non-*bắc di cư* could enter the camps. Second, the camps themselves were segregated by religion. All camps were designated as Catholic, Buddhist or Protestant, with Catholic camps being by far the most numerous.⁴⁰ Third, the camps were segregated on the basis of northern geography, by “home” province or diocese. Those who had arrived as part of a single parish unit were encouraged to resettle as such. Those who arrived as “oddments” were usually grouped with others from the same region so that there was some form of common bond shared by residents in a given camp.⁴¹

The third phase of resettlement came about as a result of the Diệm government endeavouring to relocate the *bắc di cư* so as to fulfil strategic goals of an economic, military, and political nature, specifically to use the resettled Catholics to settle under-exploited regions, providing both an economic benefit and a bulwark against Communist insurgency.⁴² The first programme was the construction of the Cái Sắn Agricultural Resettlement Project, straddling the Mekong Delta provinces of Kiên An and Long Xuyên. Some 50,000 *bắc di cư* were relocated to Cái Sắn during 1956 and 1957.⁴³ The camp was located on the banks of a series of 19 interlocked canals, 18 of which housed Catholic settlements, ordered by “home” diocese.⁴⁴ Despite problems such as malaria and Việt Cong insurgency, the area proved well suited to wet-rice production, with which many of the *bắc di cư*, as farmers from the Red River delta, were well acquainted. The other main area chosen by Diệm for relocation of the *bắc di cư*—and chosen for the same reasons—was the Central Highlands region, in particular the areas around Dalat, Pleiku, and Buôn Ma Thuột.

The role of the Catholic clergy in resettlement

Despite Diệm’s absolute insistence on the need to relocate *bắc di cư* into these new projects, their response was at best mixed. Having already once relocated

into areas where they had settled in relatively congenial surroundings, with a means of making a living and in the company of their co-religionists, most were highly reluctant to again uproot to less enticing areas. In these circumstances, the experience of flight from the north was replicated; it was very often the priest, as communal leader, who had the decisive influence in determining whether a given Catholic community would stay or go. Diệm and his refugee administration fully understood and exploited the potential of clerical authority with *bắc di cư* Catholics, which in turn became a central element in the subtle interplay of influence and counter-influence between the Church and the Catholic-led southern state. It was not by accident that their policy of recreating the socio-political structures of northern Catholic villages in the South served to reinforce traditional power relationships between priests and parishioners in their new environment.

Diệm and Lương did everything possible to retain the supremacy of the *bắc di cư* priests over their communities, notwithstanding some reluctance on the part of Bishop Chi and the Church's refugee administration. On October 7, 1955, the ten priest-delegates constituting the UBHTDC wrote to Lương explaining their reasons for accepting a temporary extension of *bắc di cư* priests' duties beyond the normal clerical role:

The basic and most important mission of priests lie in the sphere of spiritual activities, following on from the principles of the Gospel, and the dictates of Canon Law. But because of the circumstances of our nation, for the happiness of our compatriots, for the freedom of our people, and in accordance with the pressing severity of our situation at the present time, the priests have reluctantly agreed to undertake the coordination of the material aspects of the transmigration and resettlement. We will do so regardless of the hardship and suffering involved, regardless of the distortions and vile slanders of scoundrels who would harm the nation and the people, and regardless of doubting attitudes, who are sometimes also accompanied by the authorities.⁴⁵

Diệm and his Refugee Commissioner had indeed invited the priests into a role within the resettlement camps that went beyond even the widest understanding of the pastoral role of a parish priest in caring for the community under his charge. The nomenclature of their positions within the resettlement camps gave a hint of this. Priests were generally known as "spiritual leaders" (*lãnh đạo tinh thần*),⁴⁶ but sometimes the pretence of the spiritual circumscription of their roles was dropped, and they were instead referred to as "camp president" (*chủ tịch trại*),⁴⁷ "camp chief" (*trại trưởng*)⁴⁸ or "camp director" (*giám đốc trại*). These titles reveal something of the reality of the priestly leadership within the camps, in which clergy were called on to determine and implement decisions which went well beyond the range of a duties which fall within the normal domain of a parochial cleric.

But for the “closed” communities of the northern Catholic heartland, there was nothing unusual in their priests taking on such a broadly defined role. Diệm and Lương, Catholics themselves, understood this very well, and were content to use the priests as the natural community leaders to ensure the smooth implementation of their resettlement programme. They were also prepared to use their connections with the upper echelons of the Catholic hierarchy to override any reluctance on the part of the priests in adopting a non-spiritual role. When, in early 1956, Phạm Ngọc Chi and his Committee indicated an intention to withdraw priests from active roles in leadership and government liaison, Lương told Chi that to do so would be tantamount to “abandoning your children” (*mang con bỏ chợ*).⁴⁹

There were three aspects in which the government relied on the priests most heavily, and which gave the priests the greatest leverage over the communities they led, but at the same time created a great potential for dissent and destructiveness. They were, first, clerical collaboration in the administration of the camps; second, clerical custody and distribution of government and charitable subsidies and the other financial assets of the community; and third, clerical acquiescence in, or resistance to, government initiatives to relocate communities away from existing resettlement areas.

Government liaison

Each resettlement camp was administered by government officials accountable to the Commissioner. But each camp also had a Liaison Committee, comprised of government and *bắc di cư* representatives, responsible for communicating government decisions to the camp’s residents and ensuring their implementation, at the same time receiving petitions and complaints from the *bắc di cư* residents, and endeavouring to resolve them.⁵⁰ The priests derived their formal secular leadership status within the camps from their headship of these committees. They were also regularly co-opted onto working parties, or sent as delegates to conferences established to examine particular issues.⁵¹

All of this operated smoothly enough, so long as it involved the priests acting as advocates for the communities that they led, pressing the best interests and wishes of their *bắc di cư* parishioners. However, when the interests and wishes of the refugees and the PTUDCTN did not coincide, the situation of the priests became more complicated. The PTUDCTN had an expectation that the priests would play a role in implementing state policy, even when those policies were unpopular. In such situations, the priests were compelled to act as de facto agents of the Vietnamese state, and faced potential sanctions should they fail to willingly do so.⁵² Relations between the government and the clerical leadership at Cái Sắn were particularly tense. On a number of occasions, the government prevailed upon both Bishop Chi and the Apostolic Delegate to discipline the Cái Sắn priests for their failure to support government policy. Despite these conflicts, for the two and a half years of the official duration of the resettlement

programme, nearly all of the representations of *bắc di cư* interests to the civil authorities were undertaken by their clergy.⁵³

Financial management

One of the most important functions of the priest-leaders in the resettlement areas was to hold and distribute the various subsidies and grants paid to the community by the PUTDCTN, USOM, CRS, UBHTDC, and various other charitable agencies. This was not a simple task. Some subsidies were paid in money, others in food, clothing, building materials, and agricultural and other equipments. Some were paid on a per capita basis for the benefit of individual families, others for communal use.⁵⁴ The lack of auditing, or other adequate mechanisms of accountability, created numerous possibilities for embezzlement and pilfering.

The ability to hold, manage, and disburse these funds further consolidated temporal power in the hands of the priests, but also left them vulnerable to critical accusations when the required resources failed to reach the intended beneficiaries. On occasions, their own malfeasance or financial incompetence meant that monies paid to them went missing, with consequent repercussions with either the authorities or their own community. For example, an investigation at Cái Sắn found that whereas the commissioner paid to two priests a sum of 35 piastres per cubic metre of soil dug from the canal by community members, they passed on only 28, using the extra to buy and sell rice in the black market, the profits of which they kept for their own benefit.⁵⁵ On other occasions, priests were held accountable by their own communities when the misdeeds of other officials, higher up the distribution chain, meant that the intended funds or goods did not make it into the priest's possession.⁵⁶

In most resettlement camps, the priest-leaders had the responsibility to maintain an accurate roll of current camp residents, one of the uses of which was to determine the level of per capita subsidies to be paid. It was not uncommon for these lists to contain "ghost families" (*gia đình ma*): people who had either never existed, or could not be legitimately claimed as currently residing within the camp. Again, this was sometimes because the priest had deliberately inflated the figures either to maximize the fund available for communal use, or sometimes to siphon it off for his own benefit. On other occasions, the inaccuracy in the roll was a consequence of his being duped.⁵⁷

The actual criminal and moral culpability of the clergy for these losses was in many ways less significant than the adverse impression that their involvement created. When they were involved in financial wrongdoing, priestly malefactors were referred to Phạm Ngọc Chi to be dealt with by the Church (usually by transference to another role), rather than through administrative or legal sanctions. When in June 1956, Fr. Phạm Công Ngời of Hoa Lạc camp was found by the Commissioner's investigators to have been involved in selling off aid supplies in the black market, Lương recommended to Diệm that "[we should] ask Fr. Ngời

to produce his receipt books for expenditure in the camp, and at the same time, ask Bishop Phạm Ngọc Chi to remove Fr. Ngôi and replace him with another priest who is more sound".⁵⁸ Lương implicitly acknowledged that the success of the resettlement programme—regarded as one of the Diệm government's major achievements—had become so dependent on the role of the priest-leaders that, if their integrity was publicly impugned, then the success of the programme, and consequently the delivery of the *bắc di cư* vote, would be imperilled. After the discovery of a very significant episode of fraud against the Commission in early 1956, Lương's wrote to the Minister of the Interior asking that any legal action be postponed until after the election so that the *bắc di cư* cu would not know of the defalcation until after the pending election.⁵⁹ Such instances did not, however, cause either Lương's administration or Bishop Chi's committee to doubt the ability of such clergy to fulfil these decidedly non-spiritual roles.

Resettlement camp transfers

It was in the issue of camp transfers that both the potential and the limitations on the authority of *bắc di cư* clergy with their parishioners became most evident. Communities which had recently undergone the migration as refugees from north to south now faced two equally traumatic changes: fragmentation of the community as members sought to disperse, and forced relocation from the initial place of refuge to a government-chosen resettlement site.

The priests regarded the maintenance of the unity and integrity of the community as one of their first duties, entrusted to them with an almost theological significance. But this sometimes bought them into conflict with the parishioners in their care. Some *bắc di cư* managed to locate relatives in the South, or friends in other camps, and so sought to leave their community in order to join up with them. Others found that their normal trade or livelihood could not be practised in the area where they had been resettled, and identified better economic opportunities in other places. The priests, however, had a powerful weapon in preventing such dispersal. Because they controlled the camp residents lists, and hence the financial subsidies, if they refused to endorse transfer documents, they could effectively prevent a family from leaving the camp, by refusing to transfer its subsidy. Unsurprisingly, this regularly brought them into conflict with community members. In noting the six greatest challenges which he faced as Commissioner, Lương noted one of them as "people complain because the priests refuse to allow them to leave the camps to live elsewhere".⁶⁰

Forced relocation created an even greater problem. The government frequently sought to co-opt priests to persuade their often-reluctant populations, who had resettled themselves on one site, to move to another. The Commission regularly sent priests on investigatory missions with officials of the Commission, USOM and CRS, to report back (hopefully favourably) on the suitability of a proposed new site. They assumed, with some justification, that the *bắc di cư* would automatically accept the recommendations of their clerical leaders. One official asserted that "we should take the priests from some of these camps to

see the new sites in the highlands. When they see that conditions are good, they will convince people to go".⁶¹ Referring to a new project in the Central Highlands, Lương wrote to Diệm in March 1956 that "taking the opportunity afforded by the presence of a number of priests, I reached an agreement with them to move a series of 1,000 families to the two areas mentioned above, from about March 23, 1956 onwards".⁶²

However, the chain of action from government initiative, to clerical persuasion, to communal submission, was not always so facile. On occasions, priests balked at becoming agents for the implementation of government policy, or believed that planned moves were not in the best interests of their community. When the government moved to repossess the site of the Phú Thọ camp in metropolitan Saigon, the priests led an unsuccessful campaign of resistance to allow the refugees to stay on the site.⁶³ In a recent paper on the transmigration, Ronald Frankum asserts that "some Catholic clergy insisted on moving their congregations to Biên Hòa, refusing to relocate to established resettlement camps with houses and agricultural land outside the province, because the province had become a Catholic resettlement haven".⁶⁴ More often, the clergy were cast in the role of trying to persuade reluctant parishioners to move. Fr. Phạm Bá Nguyên, the Chaplain of An Hóa camp, Mỹ Tho, could not persuade his northern parishioners to move to a new site, out of fear of the militarized, piratical Hoa Hảo and Bình Xuyên sects then active in the area.⁶⁵ Other *bắc di cư* communities were reluctant to volunteer to relocate, because they believed that their stay in the South was temporary, and they had the intention of quickly returning to the North after a short period of refuge.⁶⁶ Still others feared that their economic situation might be adversely affected.

The important point is that the authority of the clergy was not absolute, and on occasions when it was exercised in a manner not congruent with the community's desires or motivations, it was liable to be challenged. At first glance, the scope of that authority appears to have gone well beyond matters pertaining to religion. Yet it was ultimately the priest's position as religious leader from which all other aspects of their authority was derived. The religious *raison d'être* to the villages in the North had often elevated the priest's position to that of overall communal leadership; the religious foundation to social organization of the *bắc di cư* settlements in the South meant that their communities bore a greater likeness to their native place (*quê*) than to their new environment.

North–South relations

In addition to the nature of their clerical leadership, religious practices also distinguished the *bắc di cư* from their southern counterparts. Until the Second Vatican Council, each diocese in Vietnam issued its own special book of devotional prayers which adherents within that diocese were required to use, both at home and in their *họ đạo*. The rituals in these books could differ markedly from one diocese to the next.⁶⁷ This localism was compounded by regional devotions

to particular saints, especially to various Vietnamese martyrs, most of whom had been martyred in the north in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and beatified in the first half of the twentieth century. Many *bắc di cư* communities continued to mark their devotion to “their” saints through statues and portraits in their churches, through festal days and processions, and through prayers seeking intercession. These communities revered such local northern figures as Anna Dê of Kim Sơn and Paul Bảo of Thái Bình, figures who had far less resonance with southern Catholics.⁶⁸ While these devotions northern Catholics to reaffirm a sense of ongoing identity and continuity amidst the displacement and dispossession of the refugee experience, they also registered the *bắc di cư* as a community whose essence of existence lay elsewhere.

For those from the northeastern dioceses of Bùi Chu, Haiphong, Lang Sơn, Bắc Ninh and Thái Bình, this sense of regional separateness was compounded by an ecclesiastical separateness. For more than three hundred years, these dioceses had been under the jurisdiction of Spanish Dominicans, as opposed to the clergy of the French *Missions Étrangères de Paris* (MEP) who had evangelized and administered the Church in most of the rest of Vietnam.⁶⁹ The Spanish Dominicans brought to their communities many distinctive devotional, ritual, and catechetical practices, different structures of parish management, and a reputation for fierce religious fervour, much of which was passed on to the communities of *bắc di cư* formed from the five Dominican dioceses.

Non-religious issues also contributed to the sense of difference. The names of many *bắc di cư* settlements in the South revealed a natural yearning for their northern past. The reuse of northern locality names such as *Hà Nội*, *Thành Hóa*, *Bùi Phát*, and a great many others, served to perpetuate their identity as an extrinsic and unassimilated cohort within southern society. Southerners frequently reacted in an antagonistic manner when they perceived their economic interests to be threatened by the *bắc di cư*, or the resettlement camps which housed them. On at least one occasion, conflicts broke out between *bắc di cư* and southerners when the latter’s land was sequestered to make way for resettlement camps.⁷⁰ Other economic issues, such as fishing rights, agricultural trade, and the over-exploitation of forest timber reserves by *bắc di cư* also became sources of conflict.⁷¹ However, there were also occasions when communal antagonisms, perhaps fuelled by religious difference, became the apparent source of violent confrontations. In Bùi Phát, a camp in suburban Saigon at close quarters with the local population, police were regularly called in through 1957 to break up street fights.⁷² Similar events also occurred elsewhere; amongst others, at Cái Sắn, and at U Minh (Kiên Giang province).⁷³ Catholic *bắc di cư* elements sometimes acted as the provocateurs; on February 2, 1957 Saigon Police reported breaking up disturbances caused by the Catholic Youth League.⁷⁴

In mid-1963, open conflict broke out between Buddhists and local Catholics in Hue, which in turn became the flashpoint for an inter-religious dispute which soon spread to Saigon and beyond. In August 1964, after Diệm’s assassination in the previous November, a small cohort of young Buddhists pursued a series

of retributive actions against Catholics. At places such as Hồ Nai near Saigon, and Tam Tòa in Danang, it was *bắc di cư* populations who were targeted as the visible, identifiable presence of Catholicism in the Southern Republic.⁷⁵ Whether it was their history of assertive self-defence of Catholic communities forged in their northern homelands and imported to their new homelands in the South, or perhaps their intensive settlement in visibly Catholic communities, the *bắc di cư* were the readily identifiable face of the Catholic Church in the Southern Republic.

Was there a change in the pre-relocation and post-relocation authority of the *bắc di cư* clergy? Did they lose authority as a consequence of the problems faced in relocation? While the nature of internal power relations within the transplanted northern Catholic communities was redefined over time, the enduring nature of the *bắc di cư* village within the South, and the resilience of its social and religious structures in the face of pressures to assimilate into southern society, suggests that popularly mandated religious authority also survived the refugee experience.

Even after the 1957–1958 dismantling of PTUDCTN, which had provided social, political and economic authority to the clergy with the mandate of both the church hierarchy and the Southern state, the *bắc di cư* retained some of their temporal authority. Northern clerics such as Fr. Hoàng Quynh continued to play leading roles in assertive protection of Catholic interests.⁷⁶ They had a reputation for delivering the votes of their communities in a rigorously disciplined fashion, thereby constituting a formidable voting bloc within the Republic's polity. And, as noted above, they continued to ensure that distinctive religious practices characterized their communities, and distinguished them from the Church into which they were notionally assimilated. The significance of this lies in the fact that it was the distinctive structure of *bắc di cư* communities, and the temporal authority vested in them by their co-terminal headship of both village and parish, that provided these priests with their most significant mandate.

Not every individual *bắc di cư* Catholic respected this mandate. Many absented themselves from these separated communities, and integrated themselves into the mainstream of southern urban life. Even those who remained sometimes rebelled when they perceived clerical authority to have been used improperly, or to have exceeded its proper, such as in instances of unpopular parish relocations, or the misuse of communal funds.

Yet when in 1958, both church and state withdrew the formalized authority of the *bắc di cư* clergy in the temporal realm, traditional customs, mediated by the northern Catholic village and its familiar structures and power relationship, found a way of reconstituting clerical authority in a manner which was not superimposed, but rather expressive of communal desires. This was not an unaccountable theocracy, but rather a culturally determined assertion of a northern Catholic worldview in which spiritual life and secular interests remained in close convergence.

Conclusion

The sources and the parameters of religious authority can transcend the institutional or doctrinal setting in which a given religion exists. The factors which legitimate religious authority in the view of a religious hierarchy, or “professional” religious practitioners, may be quite different to those which legitimate and mandate religious leadership from the standpoint of ordinary adherents.

While a given class of clerics or religious leaders might enjoy authority vested in them from both above and below, the manner in which they exercise that authority, and the outer limits to which that authority may extend, can be very dependant on the local micro-culture to which their community of followers belong. These factors, which both define and delimit their authority, may not necessarily fall within a narrow definition of “religious” phenomena. They may instead be expressive of the community’s definition of self-identity, or of its temporal needs, or of its extant socio-political situation. So it was with the *bắc đì cư* clergy. Their authority was derived not only from their status within the Catholic hierarchy, but from the fact that transplanted communities in the South, saw in their priests the remnant of the social structures to which they were accustomed, and on which they had come to depend.

Figures representing institutional authority may even find their communal leadership under challenge when their priorities fail to coincide with popular, localized aspirations.⁷⁷ These meld with more specifically spiritual considerations; the ability of those wielding religious authority to mediate the presence of the divine, to control spirits and incorporeal powers, to bring about healing, etc., to provide satisfying ritual experiences and explanatory narratives, etc. Axiomatically, when a community mandate to its religious leaders is derived from a mixture of spiritual and temporal considerations, then the mode and extent of such leadership can transgress narrow boundaries of spiritual authority, and lead into the exercise of authority in less-evidently spiritual domains.

The resettlement experience of the *bắc đì cư*, and the decisive social, political, and administrative role which their priests played in that resettlement, demonstrates the extent to which religious legitimacy is derived not only from universal belief systems, but from distinctive and localized practices, structures, and suppositions. As the work of Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz in this volume has demonstrated in another context, even as universal a religion as Christianity has, in an Asian setting, shown itself capable of cultural adaptation and convergence.

The Catholic Church is often portrayed as the universalist religious institution *par excellence* which, in its missionary endeavours, simply imposed a centralized model of hierarchy, doctrine, and worship on those it evangelised. But the experience of the *bắc đì cư* Catholics in Southern Vietnam demonstrates that this universalism nevertheless allows for—or can at least co-exist with—an alternative, localized source of religious legitimacy and authority.

Abbreviations

CRS	Catholic Relief Services
PTT	Phủ Tổng Thống (Office of the President)
PTTDNCH	Phủ Tổng Thống Đế Cộng Hòa (Archive of the President of the Republic of Vietnam)
PTUDCTN	Phủ Tổng Ủy Di Cư Tỵ Nạn (Commissioner for Refugees)
UBHTDC	Ủy Ban Hỗ Trợ Định Cư (Refugee Assistance Committee)
USOM	United States Operational Mission

Notes

1. Whilst intended as a temporary measure until national elections could be held, the partition remained in place until the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1976.
2. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam had existed since Hồ Chí Minh's Declaration of Independence on September 2, 1945. The DRVN asserted sovereignty over the whole of Vietnam. The Associated State of Vietnam, under various governments sponsored by the former Monarch, Bảo Đại, similarly asserted overall sovereignty from 1950 onwards. The South was proclaimed as the Republic of Vietnam on October 26, 1955.
3. Robert F. Randle, *Geneva 1954; The Settlement of the Indochinese War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969): 462–467.
4. PTUDCTN to Prime Minister's Office, July 15, 1955. PTTDNCH, 4041. Of these, 154,400 were repatriated soldiers and their families. The official transmigration period was originally due to end on May 15, 1955, but was extended to July 20. After that date, French and American forces were obliged to withdraw completely from their "beachhead" positions in Hanoi and Haiphong. The numbers leaving the North had by December 31, 1955, increased to 887,861; PTTDCTN to PTT, January 21, 1956, PTTDNCH, 4041. Speculation that the Diệm government had deliberately inflated the figure seems incorrect, as the same numbers were used by Lương in confidential reports to Diệm.
5. Some 150,000 Việt Minh supporters moved in the opposite direction, from South to North; D. J. Sagar, *Major Political Events in Indo-China, 1945–1990* (Oxford: Facts On File, 1991): 34. Diệm's delegation to Geneva fought unsuccessfully to have Phát Diệm and Bùi Chu excluded from the Việt Minh controlled zone; Bernard B. Fall, *Viet-Nam Witness, 1953–66* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966): 62.
6. The difficult relationship between the Việt Minh and Catholics in Liên Khứ IV (Military District IV) in the period prior to 1954 only served to exacerbate these fears.
7. The presence of this largely homogeneous, stridently anti-communist bloc also provided political and military opportunities to Diệm. However, the political and military role of the Northerners in Southern society is outside of the scope of this paper.
8. "Một Giáo Sư Sử Học" ("A Professor of History"): *Giáo Hội Công Giáo ở Việt Nam* [The Catholic Church in Vietnam] (3 vols, Calgary: Publisher Unknown, 1998): Vol. 3, 214. Precise calculations are difficult, as the Catholic Church in Vietnam is divided into three ecclesiastical provinces, of which one—Hue—straddled both sides of the seventeenth parallel.

9. In Cochinchina (the far South), persecution effectively ended in 1862 with the ceding of political power to a French colonial administration. In parts of Annam (Central Vietnam), where de facto French control came later, anti-Catholic purges continued until the late 1880s.
10. Nguyễn Hồng Dương, *Làng Công Giáo Lưu Phương (Ninh Bình) Từ Năm 1829 Đến Năm 1945* (*The Catholic Village of Luu Phuong (Ninh Binh))*, from 1829 to 1945 (Hanoi: Nhà Xuất Bản Khoa Học Xã Hội, 1997), 82–83. The North–West province of the Church was at that time comprised of i.e., the dioceses of Hanoi and Vinh; Phát Diệm was at that time a part of the Archdiocese of Hanoi.
11. The term *giáp* is difficult to define with precision. It carries the implication of a confraternity, or mutual assistance group, possibly with a spiritual or religious basis, but also suggests some form of residential proximity, like a neighborhood.
12. Ibid., 82–83. The Catholic Church prior to the Second Vatican Council regarded such religions as *đạo rôi* (“confused religions”; i.e., paganism).
13. Bishop Lê Hữu Từ had been named by Hồ Chí Minh in 1946 as “High Advisor”, whilst the Catholic Nguyễn Mạnh Hà had held the post of Minister for Economic Affairs; Joseph Buttinger, *Vietnam: A Dragon Embattle* (2 vols, London: Pall Mall Press, 1967): vol. I, 345. But Từ had resigned by 1947, and Hà had been replaced by late 1946.
14. As to Việt Minh attacks on Phát Diệm and Bùi Chu, see Bùi Diệm, *In The Jaws of History* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999): 54–59; Phillip B. Davidson, *Vietnam at War, The History, 1946–7* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1988): 116–120; Arthur J. Dommen, *The Indochinese Experience of the French and the Americans* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001): 192; Pierro Gheddo, *The Cross and the Bo Tree*. Translated by Charles Quinn (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1968): 40–43.
15. For example, a number of priests and laity had been subject to show trials in people’s courts; Anon., *Bản Buộc Tội Của Công Tố Viên Tòa Án Nhân Dân Liên Khu IV Về Vụ Án Bọn Phản Động Ở Hưng Yên* [Case for the Prosecution at the People’s Court, Zone IV, Concerning the Reactionary Gang at Hung Yen] (Vinh: Tòa Án Nhân Dân Liên Khu IV, 1953) *passim*.
16. Nguyễn Thế Thoại, *Công Giáo Trên Quê Hương Việt Nam* [*Catholicism in the Homeland, Vietnam*] (2 vols, Vietnam (place?): self-published, 2001): 410–411. Both Bishops Từ and Chi had left their sees well prior to the Geneva Accords being concluded.
17. PTUDCTN to PTT, January 21, 1956; PTTDNCH, 4041.
18. An interim PTUCDTN report calculated that, by the end of the official transmigration period, 213,635 refugees registered with the Monitoring Commission had left by French aircraft from Hanoi, 555,037 by ship from Haiphong, and 41,812 by their own means. They were transported by 4280 air flights, 445 naval voyages (338 French, 109 American, 4 Polish, and 2 English). *Evacuation des Refugies Du Nords Du 17è Parallele Vers Le Sud*, p. 5. PTTDNCH, 1088.
19. A July 1955 report of the PTUDCTN estimated that of the refugees who had applied for resettlement, 83 percent were residing in the Southern region, 14 percent in the central coastal region, and 3 percent in the Central highlands; PTUDCTN to Prime Minister’s Office, July 15, 1955; PTTDNCH, 4041. The proportion resident in the Highlands increased significantly over the following two years.
20. Cf. Cecil B. Currey, *Edward Landsdale: The Unquiet American* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co, 1988), 158–159. The clergy were in turn influenced by their Bishops,

- seven of whom had fled to the South, notwithstanding the instruction from Monsignor John Dooley, the Apostolic Delegate in Hanoi, not to do so.
21. Of course, not all parishioners did so; another demonstration that the authority of the clergy was not absolute.
 22. Decree 85-CP (195); PTTDNCH, 1090. *Diệm* had initially appointed a Commissioner for Evacuations, Nguyễn Văn Lỗi, whose leadership of the southern response to the transmigration proved ineffectual. On May 17, 1955, *Diệm* appointed Bùi Văn Lương as Commissioner; Lương was a lawyer, a career public servant, and a southern Catholic, from the Diocese of Vĩnh Long, occupied by *Diệm*'s brother, Bishop Ngô Đình Thục. Lương held the post until his office was abolished at the end of 1957, and its residual functions transferred to the *Tổng Ủy Định Diên* (Commissioner for Land Reform).
 23. The per capita subsidy paid to the refugees, many of whom arrived penniless, was a significant incentive to register with the CR, and hence live within one of the resettlement centres administered by them. Those that drifted off into Southern urban society did not receive the subsidy. A report from a Michigan State University Consulting Team estimated the number of *bắc di cư* actually resident in resettlement camps as at March 1956 at 628,000; MSU, *Review of Recommendations Concerning Proposed Field Organization of the Commissariat-General for Refugees*, p. 9. PTTDNCH, 789.
 24. Some have argued that USOM in fact took a pre-emptive role, taking over operations when Vietnamese government inaction led to bottlenecks; see Ronald B. Frankum, Jr., "To Move a Nation: The USOM and the Refugee Crisis of 1954–1955" Paper presented at the Texas Tech University 5th Triennial Vietnam Symposium, Lubbock, Texas, March 18, 2005.
 25. *Ibid.*
 26. CRS was a department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, in turn an agency of the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference; <http://libraries.cua.edu/achrcua/ncwc.html#CRS> (accessed 23 March 2005).
 27. As to Bishop Harnett, see <http://archives.nd.edu/findaids/ead/html/HNT.htm> (accessed 23 March 2005).
 28. Spellman was also a significant sponsor of American Friends of Vietnam, founded in 1954 to assist the *Diệm* regime, whose leadership included a number of influential lay Catholics, among them then Senator John F. Kennedy. See Joseph G. Morgan, *The Vietnam Lobby: The American Friends of Vietnam, 1955–1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).
 29. A 1955 report from Lương to *Diệm* claimed that 676,348 of the 886,881 *bắc di cư* were Catholic (76.3 percent); PTUDCTN to PTT, November 22, 1955; PTTDNCH, 4042.
 30. Strictly speaking, there was no territorial hierarchy in Vietnam until 1960; until then, all Vietnamese dioceses were Apostolic Vicariates, whose Bishops reported to Propaganda Fide, the Vatican dicastery for the propagation of the Faith in Mission Lands.
 31. His new office was located on the newly named Bùi Chu Street, Saigon.
 32. Ủy Ban Hỗ Trợ Định Cư (Refugee Assistance Committee), *Tm Hiểu Về Ủy Ban Hỗ Trợ Định Cư (A Brief History of the Refugee Assistance Committee)*, undated (1956?). PTTDNCH, 4402.
 33. Bulletin from the RAF, December 16, 1955. PTTDNCH, 4042. The largest donors to the RAF were, in order, the Holy See, Great Britain, America and Australia.

- Most U.S. Catholic monies were sent through CRS, whilst the French sent funds directly to the Diệm administration.
34. For example, when on October 20, 1955, Lương visited camps in Biên Hòa in order to provide a situation report to the President, he asked Bishop Chi to accompany him; PTUDCTN to PTT, November 19, 1955, p. 1. PTTDNVN, 4042. In November 1955, Lương reported to Diệm that “According to [Bishops Harnett and Chi], the transmigration has had very satisfactory results, in the spiritual and political spheres, as well as the social and economic”; PTUDCTN to PTT, November 22, 1955, 4042.
 35. PTUDCTN to PTT, July 14, 1955, p. 1; PTTDNCH, 4041. As noted above, most of those leaving from the North-Central zone found immediate sites in the adjacent South-Central zone.
 36. For example, in land adjoining the Tân Sơn Nhứt airport, and the Phú Thọ racecourse.
 37. Trần Trung Dung, Deputy Minister for National Defence, to PTT, March 23, 1956, re Phú Thọ Camp. PTTDNCH, 9855.
 38. The resettlement centres were referred to as *trại* (camps) for several years, even though many of them quickly took on the character of permanent village settlements.
 39. This had changed by late 1956, when the PTUDCTN was actively promoting the integration of the resettlement centres into provincial and local administrations; see Lương’s letter to provincial chiefs, September 11, 1956. PTTDNCH, 1181.
 40. As at November 1955, 265 out of 286 resettlement centres were described as “Catholic”; PTUDCTN to PTT, November 22, 1955; PTTDNCH, 4042. This proportion of 92.6 percent of the total is far greater than the actual proportion of Catholics (76 percent) amongst the *bắc di cư*. This is perhaps accounted for by a greater proportion of non-Catholics seeking integration into Southern society without recourse to resettlement schemes.
 41. See, for example, the description below of resettlement patterns at the Cái Sắn project.
 42. A further motivation was the relief of overcrowding in existing resettlement areas, particularly those in the central coastal provinces such as Thừa Thiên Huế and Quảng Nam—Đà Nẵng. Some commentators have suggested that even the second-phase developments were undertaken by Diệm with political motives, to create a “ring of steel” around Saigon, not to protect it against communists, but against restive elements within the RVN’s own military. However, evidence for this proposition is unconvincing.
 43. Secretariat of State for the Republic of Vietnam. *Cái Sắn: The Dramatic Story of Resettlement and Land Reform in the “Ricebowl” of the Republic of Vietnam* (Saigon: Secretariat of State for the Republic of Vietnam, 1957): 8.
 44. Report of Minister for Land Reform re Cái Sắn, July 6, 1956; PTTDNCH, 4405. The last canal housed Buddhist and Protestant settlements.
 45. UBHTDC to PTUDCTN, October 7, 1955; PTTDNCH, 4042.
 46. From numerous examples, see Minutes of Meeting of the Refugee Committee for Đà Lạt, May 26, 1956; all priests were listed as “spiritual leader”; PTTDNCH, 1089.
 47. PTUDCTN to PTT, October 29, 1955; PTTDNCH, 4041.
 48. PTUDCTN to PTT, November 19, 1955; PTTDNCH, 4041.
 49. PTUDCTN to Phạm Ngọc Chi, April 14, 1956; PTTDNCH, 4423.

50. The government representative at Cái Sắn reported that he “regularly meets with priests and representatives to discuss and resolve problems”; Nguyễn Văn Thời to PTUDCTN, May 31, 1956; PTTDNCH, 4405.
51. For example, all 12 camp representatives on the Đà Lạt Resettlement Committee were Catholic priests; see Minutes of Meeting of the Refugee Committee for Đà Lạt, May 26, 1956; PTTDNCH, 1089. A conference at the Commissioner’s Saigon headquarters on September 9, 1956 concerning how best to ensure that supplies reach camps had 12 participants; each of the five camp delegates were priests; PTTDNCH, 4402.
52. For example, Lương appointed Fr. Nguyễn Viết Khai, a priest of Vinh Diocese, as resettlement co-ordinator for the Central Highlands region, but when Khai started to complain that the land and financial assistance programme was inadequate, he was described by government officials as “troublesome. As to Khai’s appointment, see PTUDCTN to PTT, April 6, 1956; PTTDNCH, 4404. As to the complaints, see the comments governments” delegate to the Highlands, Mr Kinh, at a conference organized by the Commissioner on October 4, 1956; PTTDNCH, 4399.
53. However, a lay political leadership soon emerged. In the 1960s, the *bắc di cư* Catholics were regarded as being one of the most disciplined voting blocs in the Republic. Politicians actively courted their clerical leaders in the hope that they might direct the support of their adherents.
54. Monies used for the erection of church buildings—always an early priority of *bắc di cư* communities—came from the RAF or CRS, thereby maintaining the pretence of separation of church and state.
55. *Initial Report of Investigation of Theft at Cái Sắn*, October 1956; PTTDNCH, 10454.
56. A case in point is that of Fr. Quý, spiritual leader at Trảng Lớn camp, Tây Ninh province: PTUDCTN to Minister for the Interior, June 6, 1956. PTTDNCH, 4456.
57. For example, at Lâm Sơn Camp, 576 residents were listed, whereas in fact there were only 350, or even less. At Tân Phát, the list showed 3500 people, but the Priest in charge of the camp knew of only 3250: PTUDCTN to PTT; PTTDNCH, 4042.
58. PTUDCTN to PTT, June 4, 1956; PTTDNCH, 4457.
59. PTUDCTN to Minister for the Interior, February 21, 1956; PTTDNCH, 4454.
60. Undated hand-written note (March 1955?), PTTCHVN, 4041. In June 1956, Lương heard complaints of residents of the Đa Minh Camp, a mixed community of farmers and fishermen who had been resettled in the Central Highlands that, whereas it would be sensible to split the camp so that the farmers remain whilst the fishermen go to the new canals of Cái Sắn, their priest-leader, Fr. Đỗ Trọng Bích, had refused to allow this: PTUDCTN to PTT, June 6, 1956; PTTDNCH, 1089.
61. Minutes of meeting July 23, 1956, at Resettlement Commission, regarding resettlement at Pleiku. PTTDNVN, 4408.
62. PTUDCTN to PTT, March 19, 1956; PTTDNCH 4404.
63. PTUDCTN to Fr. Trần Ngụ Nhạc, October 1, 1956; PTTDNCH, 4417.
64. Frankum, *To Move a Nation*.
65. Trần Văn Lắm, government representative for the South to PTT, December 21, 1955. PTTDNCH, 4421.
66. Minutes of meeting July 23, 1956 at Resettlement Commission, regarding resettlement at Pleiku. PTTDNCH, 4408
67. The Parish Priest of a Ho Chi Minh City parish with a mixed community of Southern and Northern Catholics told me in 2003 that the *bắc di cư* in his parish

- still prayed their Northern prayers at home, having passed them on to succeeding generations.
68. Southern Catholics had their own, rather more limited pantheon, with such as Matthew Lê Văn Gấm, a Southern Martyr. Both the Transmigration, and the later canonization of 117 Vietnamese Martyrs in 1988, helped to broaden the cult of individual saints from beyond the local to the national, and even international.
 69. Phạm Ngọc Chi was only the second non-Spanish Dominican Bishop of Bùi Chu.
 70. Nguyễn Văn Thới, Minister for Telecommunications and Land Reform, to PTUDCTN, December 10, 1955; PTTDNCH, 4415.
 71. See, for example, the series of documents, both of complaints by locals, and investigations dealing with them, as to the activities of Fr. Phạm Ngọc, concerning deforestation in Long Khánh province; PTTDNCH, 11916. His activities ultimately earned the intervention of President Diệm, who wrote to the Province Chief "I (NDD) ask you to explain to the settlers one last time that my government has helped them a great deal concerning making a living, establishing agriculture, fishing, small industry, etc. They therefore have the capacity to make a living without the need to profit by destroying the forest. If anyone should disobey the forestry law, then they will be answerable to the state." Ibid.
 72. Minutes of Conference at PTUDCTN, November 27, 1956, PTTDNCH, 4800; Huỳnh Văn Thành, Resettlement representative in Saigon, to CR, re Bùi Phát Camp, June 21, 1957, PTTDNCH, 4800; Secretary of State to PTUDCTN, Jul 23, 1957, PTTDNCH, 4800.
 73. For example, there was a series of disturbances between *bắc di cư* and locals at Khẩu Bàng camp, in Bến Tre province, in September 1955, which Lương attributed to "misunderstanding between the refugees and the locals, with the refugees appearing to be alarmed"; PTUDCTN to PTT, November 6, 1955. PTTDNCH, 4042. As to U Minh, see Memo of Province Chief, Kiên Giang, July 23, 1957, PTTCHVN, 4800. As to Cái Sắn, see Province Chief, An Giang, April 2, 1958, re riots between locals and di cu at Cai San on March 26, 1958; PTTDNCH, 12731.
 74. Trần Văn Tỵ, Director of Police, Report. of Police Activities in Saigon, February 1957; PTTDNCH, 124.
 75. Fall, *Viet-Nam Witness*, 287–288; Robert J. Topmiller. *The Lotus Unleashed: The Buddhist Peace Movement in South Vietnam, 1964–1966* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2002): 18–19; Jean Lacouture, *Vietnam: Between Two Truces*, Translated by Konrad Kellen and Joel Carmichael (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966): 208–210. Axiomatically, it was largely Catholic groups drawn from the *bắc di cư* population, such as the "Central Committee for the Defence of Catholicism", who fought back, both politically and in street action, in representing Catholic interests; Lacouture, *Vietnam: Between Two Truces*, 208.
 76. Ibid., 208; Fall, *Viet-Nam Witness*, 287.
 77. For example, see the works of William A. Christian concerning popular piety and institutional religion in Spain; William A. Christian, *Visionaries: The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996): 6, *Local Religion in Sixteenth Century Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988): 23–33.

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Part III

State and Religious Ethnicity

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7

The Making of Islamic Law: Local Elites and Colonial Authority in British Malaya

Iza Hussin

In the Federal Constitution of Malaysia (1957), a “Malay” is defined as: “a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language... (and) conforms to Malay custom”.¹ This link between religious and ethnic identity illustrates just one of the ways in which Muslims are defined by the states in which they live, and the role law plays in that definition. In Malaysia, Malay ethnicity is inextricable not only from Islam, but also from preferential economic, political and social rights, among them rights to land ownership, cultural dominance and rulership. Law defines the Malay Muslim subject, but the law relating to Islam and Muslims itself has undergone radical transformation, in Malaysia and throughout the Muslim world. The shari’ah, the path of right conduct for Muslims, is often understood to be equivalent to “Islamic law”, which has had the effect of making law and religion inextricable. However, what is often referred to as “Islamic law” in post-colonial Muslim states like Malaysia is not the shari’ah, a body of rules whose jurisdiction covers all areas of life and forms the divinely guided path of right conduct for every Muslim. Instead, contemporary Islamic law is shari’ah transformed by state and societal actors, into a state-controlled province of law—legal actors, institutions and discourses—whose jurisdiction is limited to matters of family law and religious observance.

This chapter will discuss the processes by which Islamic law was made in the British colonial state in Malaya between 1874 and 1914. There was a central paradox at work in the transformation of Islam and the laws which governed it: at the same time that their jurisdiction was being limited and their administration defined by the state, the authority of Islamic law and Muslim elites became critical components of that state. In British colonial Malaya, for example, local and colonial elites negotiated the scope, content and meaning of Islamic law in ways which had far-reaching effects not only on the law, but also on elite power, Malay identity and finally upon the state itself. These negotiations took place in many spaces: in treaties and trials, in royal courts and on battlefields, in legal texts and religious publications.

Here, “law” refers to discourses on what was authoritative, the institutions which administered and maintained these ideas, and the people who participated within this system.² In the vein of the analysis of religious change offered by the Introduction to the volume, law is implicated in, and constructive of, society, theology and technology. In contrast to law, the concept of “shari’ah” translates to “way”, “path”, and refers to a much wider body of authoritative guidance on all areas of Muslim life, only a small portion of it legal in nature. Prior to British intervention in Malaya, justice was arbitrated by local chiefs using a combination of customary practices (*adat*), maritime and trading rules, and legal codes: shari’ah rules were a source of law, and Islamic authority a part of its legitimacy, but shari’ah did not constitute the law of Malaya. Neither did a separate body of law labelled “Islamic” lay claim over any discrete area of Muslim life. Negotiations between local and colonial elites radically redefined not only the content of Islamic law, but created a separate province of the religious and the cultural over which it could rule, controlled by the state and particular local elites.

This transformation in law was comprised of three major processes which had far-reaching consequences for religion, state and society: the first process was the division of jurisdiction between local and colonial elites, the second was the effort to define Islam and Islamic law. As local elites acted to adapt to their new situation, take advantage of opportunities presented by the British and limit colonial intervention, they too underwent important changes, and so the third process in the making of Islamic law was the transformation of Muslim elites themselves. These processes made Islamic law what it is in Malaysia today: a defining but limited part of the Muslim state, whose authority depends upon both the centrality of Islamic legitimacy and the circumscription of shari’ah-inspired rules to the realms of the family, gender relations, religious endowments, and worship.

Dividing jurisdiction

In Malaya, formal intervention by the British into Malay affairs was secured by treaties, the terms of which fenced off a province of autonomy for local elites while at the same time establishing British jurisdiction over all other areas of the state. “Jurisdiction” involved the right to dictate the law, its meaning and its development. For the purposes of this chapter, jurisdiction is the question, *whose law* was Islamic law?³ On January 20, 1874, the Treaty of Pangkor was signed between some Malay chiefs and Sir Andrew Clarke, the Governor General of the Straits Settlements, installing Raja Abdullah as Sultan of Perak and alongside him a British Resident.⁴ The treaty provided that “the Resident’s advice must be asked and acted upon (in Perak) on all questions other than those relating to Malay religion and custom, and that the collection and control of all revenue and the general administration of the country must be regulated under the advice of these Residents”.⁵

The Treaty of Pangkor in Malaya (1874) initiated the division of jurisdiction between local and colonial elites, assigned jurisdiction over specific areas of

law, society and state to Malay and colonial elites, and by doing so set the stage for the transformation of Islamic law and the Muslim state. By excluding other elites from the colonial state, reassigning political-economic resources, establishing a new language for negotiation between parties, these treaties set into motion forces which would initiate new struggles within the law. The crucial contribution of this treaty to the states which came to be built over them was a new space in their politics—a discrete space for religion and culture, and for an “Islamic law” separate from the rest of the state. These struggles would later carry into the post-colonial state.

The phrase “matters of religion and custom” became crucial for Malay elites. The Treaty brought into being an area of autonomy for Malay rulers, “matters of religion and custom”, as well an area of colonial control: revenue and general administration. Careful to establish their legitimacy as commercial and secular “advisors” to Malay and Muslim rulers, British officials in Malaya kept the arena of religion, custom and traditional practice explicitly out of their own scope of authority. In dividing territories of governance among themselves and the Malay rulers, however, religious and racial identity, not previously a major part of Malay elite legitimacy or discourse, became the centre of the Malay elite domain and the key to their survival.

The English and Malay understandings of the Treaty of Pangkor differed: Raja Abdullah agreed to “ask and accept” the advice of a British Resident. The British believed that the wording of the treaty meant that the Resident’s advice had to be acted upon by the Raja, whereas the Raja’s interpretation leaned more heavily on the notion that the Resident’s role was consultative rather than executive. The Malay rulers later found that the English version of the treaty documents were far more assertive about the rights and powers of the Resident than the Malay version. Beyond the text itself, there were conflicts over control of resources and territory that no treaties could contain, that threatened to rupture the fragile agreements achieved. Within months of the Pangkor Treaty, major conflicts between local Malay and British colonial elites occurred over the British of religion and custom: taxation and slavery, issues which Malay elites saw as central to their power. This conflict led to the killing of the first British Resident in Malaya, the aftermath of which gave rise to yet another legal conflict—the trial of most of the major figures in the Perak ruling class for conspiracy to murder the British Resident.

The Pangkor Treaty was signed at the beginning of 1874, and by the end of 1875 James Birch, the first British Resident in Malaya was dead, from numerous spear wounds inflicted by a group of locals who attacked him while he was bathing in a river in Pasir Salak, Perak. The attack on Birch, and the swift and brutal reprisals by British troops (shipped in by the thousands from India and the Straits Settlements), are together called the Perak War. Soon after the attack, British investigations and eye-witness accounts revealed that the assassins were closely associated with key Malay elites in Perak.

While the treaties between the British government and the Sultans concentrated on Malay elite power in the specific domain of religion and custom, several

incidents like the Perak War during the first three decades of British indirect rule reveal that the British understanding of “religion and custom” was not what the Sultans (in Perak and other Malay States) themselves considered their natural and proper jurisdiction. The Malay chiefs, and the newly appointed Sultan, disagreed with the British attempt to remove slavery (mostly in the form of debt bondage) and taxation from their control.⁶ Whereas the British interpreted both of these areas to be outside the realm of “matters of religion and culture” as provided by the Pangkor Treaty, control over household and community indentured labour and the ability to collect taxes were central components of Malay elite authority and power.

The chiefs and the Sultan saw Birch’s actions as being tantamount to “taking over the country for the Queen”, and attempted to keep Birch in a purely consultative function.⁷ Contrary to their understanding of the Treaty, he prevented them from collecting the taxes they saw as their due for governing and protecting the country, he attempted to pressure the Sultan into giving up more and more power, he encouraged slaves and especially the women of the chiefs’ households to escape and would not return them if they sought shelter with him, he gave them away in marriage without consulting the chiefs, and he was rumoured to have relationships with one or more of these women.⁸ When the Sultan showed reluctance to approving further delegation of his authority, Birch threatened his position as Sultan. Birch also considered replacing Abdullah with the deposed Sultan, Ismail, but when Ismail suggested that the Pangkor Treaty be re-negotiated in his favour, Birch replied, “the Pangkor Treaty is just like the Koran, it is impossible to add a line to it, or to take a line from it”.⁹ In the eyes of the Malay elites of Perak, not only was Birch acting as if he were sovereign, he was placing British law and agreements on the same level as local religious and political authority.

After the Perak War, both sides carried with them the memory and the threat of violence into negotiations, leading a British official to comment, “by the action which his [Birch’s] death made necessary, the State of Perak gained in twelve months what ten years of ‘advice’ could hardly have accomplished”.¹⁰ By October 1876, almost all the major Malay figures in Perak, including the Sultan, had been replaced, paving the way for new relationships between elites in the state. In this new regime, areas of law which local elites had reserved for themselves—like slavery and taxation, as well as what the British themselves defined as religion and custom, such as laws on marriage and gender—were no longer sacrosanct. Violent and extraordinary suppression of civil rebellion brought to the forefront the imbalance of military power in favour of the British, and in doing so made opposition over the content of treaties much riskier for the elites who remained.

In Malaya, as in British India a century before, colonial officials worked to define what was “Islamic” in a number of ways, attempting to fix the content of the law through an increasing reliance on texts of law and processes of codification, and attempting to unify its application across diverse territories. British

officials attempted to derive the law from classical texts (instead of local practice) while at the same time preserving the intent of British policy, attempting to implement the broader agenda of governance and economic extraction. Local Muslim elites attempted to use its resources, its power and even its personnel towards the furtherance of their own ends. Policy imperatives of colonial officials in London, Calcutta or Singapore often differed from the realities which their subordinates encountered on the ground. The definition of Islam and Islamic law was not unanimous even amongst British officials: in the case below, for example, the British District Collector in Kuala Selangor, who was charged with executing policy, his superior the Resident of Selangor, and the local kadi (Islamic judge), in a case of adultery. The District Collector's initial complaint to the Resident was that the local Islamic judge was attempting to use the power of the colonial state to enforce his judgements, and "I have told him distinctly that I cannot do or in any way mix myself up with religious matters."¹¹

While the Resident's instructions appeared, up to this point, to uphold the separation of jurisdictions, his next requirements call for a number of conditions which the enforcement of Islamic law had to meet, conditions which the officer on the ground found contradictory:

If the Kadi imposes a sentence which either because of recalcitrance on the part of the person sentenced, or otherwise, he requires your assistance to enforce, you must satisfy yourself on these points before assisting him (1) that an offense against Mahomedan law has been committed (2) that the person sentenced is guilty, (3) that the sentence is just.¹²

The enforcement of the Kadi's judgement could be deployed only with the colonial official's approval, which laid the justice of Islamic law not, finally, at the hands of the kadi or Sultan, but in the judgement of the Collector and/or Resident. However, the British official on the ground was adamant that his office not be involved in the application of Islamic law, while his superior's instructions were fraught with the potential contradictions of trying to apply both "Mahomedan law" and British justice.¹³ It was partly struggles like these, between both British and Malay elites, which led to efforts to define Islamic laws, regularise their implementation, codify their content and place their application in the hands of judges in the employ of the colonial state. Perhaps even more than this, imperatives of colonial rule, and the power struggles between local and British elites, led to the differing treatment of areas of law.

Defining Islam

The division of jurisdiction entailed not only deciding *who* had control over Islamic law, but *what* Islamic law was to be. This section details the ways in which divided jurisdiction and the politics of the colonial state led to the definition, and separation, of three areas of law previously subsumed within the

jurisdiction of Malay elites: slavery, family law and land law. Whereas Malay elites saw all three of these areas of law as being within their jurisdiction, the British had three different approaches. Slavery had to be abolished because it was morally indefensible and therefore required British intervention; family law had to be kept within the Malay elite domain because it represented the core of what the British saw as “religion and custom”; and land law lay in between these extremes. Laws of land tenure needed to be reformed to serve the interests of British trade and economic extraction, but at the same time it was to be the centre of a new kind of relationship with the Malays, a relationship based upon the preservation of “tradition”. Through negotiations of these three categories of law, British and Malay elites reshaped the meaning not only of Islamic law, but of the state, of categories of public and private, religious and secular—of Islam itself—in ways which endure into the post-colonial state.

Slavery is an example of an area of law where the autonomy of local elites in matters of religion and culture was overridden by British legal and moral principles. The authority of sultans over religion and custom was not absolute, even in theory. There were some moral issues so important to the British that they were by that fact taken into the ambit of British courts, where English law superceded any other.¹⁴ Whereas the chiefs clearly considered slaveholding a matter allowed by both Islam and Malay custom, and in fact a matter of their households, British public opinion and policy required its prohibition, and the British legal principle of repugnancy facilitated this. After the Perak War, however, this policy was couched in more careful terms: slavery was to be eliminated “with as little delay as is consistent with the necessary caution which is to be observed in the new relations with Perak”.¹⁵ The practice was officially ended with the emancipation of all slaves in Perak on the last day of 1883.

A stated mission of the colonial government was to bring British methods of government and practices of civilisation to native states under British protection; however, maintaining ruler control over religion and custom was a pillar of the policy of indirect rule and seen as representing British imperial regard for rule of law. The elimination of slavery as an issue of justice overcame the maintenance of Malay rulers’ prerogatives over religion and custom, just as the British judicial principle of “repugnancy” allowed British judges working in Malaya to disregard any local legal practices they found to be contrary to the values of British justice, subjecting even matters of religion and custom to the forms and language of Crown law. In the decades after the Pangkor Treaty, the colonial state made further gains into the realms of religion and custom. In the late 1870s, British principles of law and methods of administration had clearly begun to make an impact on the legal system in Malaya, and by the 1880s the courts were administering British policy in some areas of law, while upholding Malay custom in others, and more often than not using legal reasoning and tools from British, Malay and Islamic legal systems on a daily basis.

Even where British officials attempted to preserve the letter of shari’ah law, as in the case of laws relating to the family, marriage, divorce, inheritance, and

women, “colonial administrators may never have changed Islamic legal arrangements quite so profoundly as when they were trying to preserve them”.¹⁶ Ahmad Ibrahim, the jurist primarily responsible for the Administration of Muslim Law Act in Malaysia, argued that the British understanding of religion was conditioned by the relationship between Christianity and the state in Europe. When applied to Islam and the state, this understanding of religion not only failed to capture the wider scope which Islam claims over Muslim life, but gave British officials more scope for their own policy actions.

The core of Islamic family law in the modern state are laws which govern Muslim marriage and divorce, and if matters of religion and culture were to remain a matter of local elite autonomy, we would expect that the colonial state would interfere least in this arena. Laws regulating marriage and divorce were, however, routinely passed by the early colonial state, requiring registration of marriages and divorces, dictating the age of marriage, punishing adultery, regulating polygamy, and laying out rules for husbands, wives, and children. Further, the notion of a private domestic sphere was a construction of the colonial state, brought into public discourse by Victorian ideals of women and family as well as elite defence of their legal autonomy.

As Malay identity and Muslim legitimacy became more unified, traditional customary practices which did not align with the dominant interpretation of Islamic law began to be replaced with Islamic legal practices codified by British elites. In order for the Sultans to benefit from their position as Islamic rulers, however, Malay traditional legal practices had to be recast into the mould of Islamic law. One example of this was the gradual shift within the northern states, which before colonialism practised a combination of matriarchal Malay customary law (*adat pepatih*) and Islamic law, towards more patriarchal laws of land ownership, marriage, divorce and women’s participation in society, in a different corpus of Malay traditional practice, *adat temenggong*.¹⁷ British interpretations of “Islamic family law” from India came to be accepted legal practice for some areas of Malay religion and custom.

In the case of family law, Victorian legal ideas combined with local elites’ willingness to define areas relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and women as “Islamic”. This did not mean non-interference by the colonial state, however. On the one hand, many among the British who came to native states believed that part of their mission was a humanitarian one: to improve the lives of the native, and the mission of the emancipation of women was an important part of this project. On the other hand, many of these same officials brought with them the assumptions and gender ideals of the Victorian period, in which the nature and role of women was still part of a larger patriarchal discourse. Local judges and local practices were replaced by a regularised, codified and hierarchical state administration of “Muslim family law” where none had existed before, defining a new private and domestic arena.

Distinct from this religious, private and domestic arena, nominally controlled by Malay elites, was the arena of public law and state administration,

independent from religion and custom. The division of jurisdiction not only changed who controlled and defined Islamic law, it also opened a way for the fundamental redefinition of what Islamic law meant. This was not, however, a unilateral process: the increasing use of formal courts (often presided over by British judges) by Muslims in family law cases meant greater opportunities for a diversity of approaches to Islamic law even within state courts, both by individual litigants and judges. In the 1867 Malayan case of *Chulas and Kachee v. Kolson bte Seydoo Malim*, the court argued that “the general principles of English law cannot be applied to locals who have their own, distinct, social and religious institutions. The application of these principles will result in injustice and cruelty”.¹⁸ In 1869, the question arose as to whether a married Muslim woman had the ability to undertake a contract. The court in Malacca decided that the basis of the decision must be the law which governed her marriage contract—Islamic law—the judge commented that under common law, man and wife were considered one person, whereas under Islamic law they are separate legal beings, so a married woman’s property does not come under the jurisdiction of her husband.¹⁹ The freedom of British judges to interpret justice and equity for themselves according to Victorian principles, though, meant that such instances were rare, and that even where Islamic law or local matrilineal customs allowed more equitable treatment of women, British judges would limit the application of these rules. Often, the colonial state and existing local (elite and patriarchal) institutions worked together to govern women and the family.²⁰

The availability of “matters of religion and custom” as categories of state law allowed claimants to choose between custom and religion to their advantage, as in the case of *adat pepatih* (matriarchal customary practices in states like *Negri Sembilan*). The Perak State Council (1907) recognised Malay custom as a “part of the public law of the country”: “It is the custom of the Perak Malays in the matter of property division after divorce, when the said property has been obtained by one or both parties during the marriage, to accept the division of two parts to the man and one part to the woman, and that gifts between married people cannot be taken back even after divorce.”²¹ In Malaya, women used (and continue to use) custom to claim rights in courts, where prevailing Islamic law and Victorian ideals provided them little recourse.

The politics of Islamic law and Muslim identity are also inextricable from the historical development of categories of “public” and “private”, religious and secular as part of the governing repertoire of the state, and the self-conceptions of its subjects. The family was both a private domain and a space upon which public good was founded and the individual was formed. “By being identified with the family, the sharia becomes at once functionally central to political order and theoretically the guarantor of individual privacy and of individual self-government in what is increasingly becoming a secular society.”²² The categories of “public” and “private”, “religious” and “secular,” “family” and “state,” therefore, are dyads, interdependent and co-constitutive. In the modern state, the religious has no meaning separate from the secular, the private cannot be

understood except through reference to the public. The same can be said about the relationship between Islamic law and secular law. To revisit one of the paradoxes I began with, the confinement of Islamic law to the domains of family, gender, religious observance and confessional identity is inseparable from the centrality of Islamic law and Islam-centred politics within the modern Muslim state. The state has become an undeniable fact of Islamic law and Muslim politics, and its institutions, jurisdictions and language an inescapable part of even the most vehement Islamic opposition figures. What appears a fundamental paradox, upon closer inspection, is really two halves of the same phenomenon.²³

British colonial officials attempted to fix and unify local practice, but also brought with them understandings of Islamic legal practice from other sites of colonisation, primarily India. They attempted to unify the content and application of Islamic law, and in doing so codified and regularised a system of law which had previously depended upon the judgements of individual judges and local Muslim elites, in time either incorporating these elites into the Islamic bureaucracy or replacing them with British judges. These British judges applied Islamic law alongside British law, and subjected both to doctrines imported from British law. Doctrines of equity and repugnance were meant to achieve justice where the strict implementation of legislation might not, and were critical in legitimising the British imperial project.²⁴ The use of British judges not trained in the application of Islamic law, or the application of British laws to Muslim subjects, led to criticisms of the administration of justice in the Malay states. These judges would apply equity and tort principles, or English law, in cases where no written provisions were deemed to apply.²⁵ Principles such as equity, repugnance and good conscience established a hierarchy of law within the colonial justice system, whereby British judges could override even that which they were meant to uphold.

More importantly, the use of these doctrines in local courts—even in family law—established a moral hierarchy within the law: British doctrines of justice over Islamic principles. Another principle of law which allowed the gradual increase of English legal content in the legal system of Malaya was the sense that Islamic law simply did not cover all eventualities, and where the Quran and classical texts were silent, English law or British judgement could fill in the blanks. The reliance on textual forms of law and the rise in codification of Islamic law, as well as the concomitant reduction in Islamic legal interlocutors working in the courts who could interpret new cases in light of Islamic legal principles, or using shari'ah jurisprudential techniques, contributed further to the sense that Islamic law was a finite and fixed resource.

British elites gained prominence in the law, while Islamic sources and Muslim judges came to play supporting roles, if any, in the legal system of Malaya and other Muslim states. But this decline in legitimacy and authority within British systems of Islamic law gave rise to new kinds of Islamic legal scholarship, as well. Muslim legal officials, interpreters, jurists, advisors, and other functionaries of the courts and the colonial government continued to play an important role in

the everyday articulation and delivery of Islamic law. However, their growing association with the British caused a contradictory situation: they now had the means to enforce and regularise Islamic law across their jurisdictions, but were losing the authority and mandate to do so.²⁶ Kadis in Malaya, for example, often appeared in court to perform multiple functions, which could conflict—in the Federated Malay States, kadis were called to advise on matters of property and inheritance, or as the tax collector for the state.²⁷ Among British judges, the general opinion was that these local officials could not be trusted to be impartial, their low salaries and local connections left them open to corruption, their inconsistency and diversity of opinions—a central asset in Islamic legal scholarship—a clear sign of their lack of training and professionalism. British policy and the problem of local legitimacy conspired to produce a decline in the presence of local judicial officials in courts, and a rise in the resort to unofficial venues and non-state jurists to adjudicate matters of Islamic law.

Whereas the removal of slavery from the ambit of local elites was seen as a moral imperative, and the maintenance of family law within the authority (however nominal) of Malay rulers was seen as central to ruler legitimacy, land law formed the keystone supporting the entire project of British reorganisation of Malay authority. British officials used Islamic concepts and Malay elites participated in the reinvention of “traditional” social relations, in the service of British economic aims, the consolidation of Malay elite authority, and the pacification of the Malay rural majority. In Malaya, changes in territorial jurisdiction upheld the power of local rulers while at the same time allowing colonial expansion into the interior and the securing of private property for colonial economic interests. There was a rapid and comprehensive change in land law, and a more gradual but no less wide-ranging change in the roles of some elites at the expense of others. Both the Sultans and the British upheld the traditions of Malay agrarian life, emphasising the virtue of Malay pastoralism while isolating most Malays in villages. Very often, both change and conservation were legitimated through appeals to Islam and to “tradition”.

In the area of land tenure, the British were looking for the answer to the problem, “who owns this land?” They looked first to Islamic law and then to customary land tenure systems to provide the answer, but found that instead of clear rights of ownership which could be recorded in title documents, those who cultivated land had rights of use as well. Their solution was the reform of the land system, but the violent revolt of Malay elites during the Perak War served as an object lesson in what happened when the British struck at the core of Malay interests, and so colonial officials sought ways to incorporate Malay elite interests and legitimacy within the new system. In 1883, W. E. Maxwell, Colonial Commissioner of Lands, sent a letter to the Colonial Secretary proposing a Bill for the consideration of Parliament,

under which it will, I believe, be possible to systematise the administration of the Land Department of the Colony, and to organise a system of district

government through native headmen. The two subjects are inseparably connected, and while, on the one hand, no land revenue system can possibly work without the intelligent employment of local native officials, so, on the other hand, the employment of native headmen as a rural police will be of little avail unless they have a local influence founded upon their position as land-owners and land revenue collectors.²⁸

Maxwell, who had been Assistant Resident in Perak after Birch's death, was a vehement proponent of land reform in the Malay states. The major problem for Maxwell was that it was close to impossible to gain a coherent understanding of current Malay practices or customs relating to land tenure. He attempted to solve this problem by himself publishing an account of Malay land tenure based on Malay literary sources and his own observations, upon which he based the justification for his reform proposal—that it was an expression of true Malay and Muslim ideals and practices. Maxwell pointed out that rights to land, separate from ownership of land, were conferred by continuous usage of the land and that the laws put in place in Malaya by British authorities ignored this in favour of English land law based on medieval concepts. Maxwell's desire to combine Malay customary land practices with a "modern" system led to his investigation of the possibility of adapting the Torrens system, developed in Australia, to the Malay states.²⁹

His solution was entirely novel to both colony and metropole: a combination of the Torrens system, with an adaptation of what he called a "tithe", an assessment on land allowable under Islamic law. Frank Swettenham, who was then Resident in Selangor, disagreed, arguing that the tithe was not part of Malay custom. Maxwell's reply argued in essence that this new method of taxation was in essence upholding Malay and Islamic ideals, something the current Malay rulers could not do without the colonial state:

Because Mr. Swettenham and Mr. Rodger have not seen in the Malay Peninsula a Mohammedan government sufficiently civilized and well-organized to collect its taxes properly, they have assumed that the recognized Mohammedan taxes are not leviable. This is an entire mistake. It is also an error to suppose that the Malay cultivator is a serf with no proprietary interest in the land he cultivates, merely because a Malay Raja may be a tyrant...Mr. Swettenham in his description of the uncertainty of rights under Malay Government...has mistaken these exactions and this oppression for the law, instead of regarding them, as Malays do, as invasions of it, to be submitted to of necessity when the perpetrator is the supreme ruler, and this is all the more remarkable because, under some circumstances, he finds that, their interests and feelings are too important to be disregarded.³⁰

Alongside the construction of "indigenous law" and the elaboration of a system for its application was the construction, in the British colonial mind, of the

“native ruler” and of Malay/Muslim aspirations. The product of these processes of construction may have been entirely novel, as the application of the Torrens system in Malaya was, but it was couched in an appeal to Islamic law and an ideal of Malay governance. In addition, Maxwell’s new definition of Malay land law involved the entrenchment of a “traditional” power—that of local headmen (*penghulu*)—in a new role, as functionaries of the state. This redefinition of the law, therefore, also redefined Malay elite structures and power. While most Malay chiefs were given titles and pensions in the new state organisation, their actual role in politics diminished during the early period of British Residency. These chiefs, who had previously held power over the Sultans through their control of local territory and resources and whose rivalries constituted much of the dynamics of Malay politics, found themselves increasingly isolated from the Sultans by the Residents and from their local domains by individuals and institutions given prominence by the colonial state.

Conversely, the traditional Malay position of *penghulu*, the village headmen who played important roles prior to colonial intervention, became a central part of the daily local administration of the colonial state: they performed the functions of police, collected taxes, kept the peace and resolved disputes, as well as reported to the Residents on local conditions and the feasibility of colonial policies.³¹ They played, in fact, much the same role they had in Malay society prior to the arrival of the British and the growth of a bureaucratic state, but at the same time their appointments were made official, their salaries were paid by the state, and their duties multiplied. So essential were they to the colonial state, in fact, that Residents began to seek ways of establishing a class of Malay administrators and local agents through a new system of education and through encouraging able Malays to enter government service.

Re-making local elites

Negotiations between local and colonial elites over Islamic law in Malaya resulted in changes in the law itself, in its institutions, its personnel, its content and its scope. These negotiations also had profound effects on local elites, altering elite hierarchies and the strategies by which elites sought legitimacy, maintained power and organised the state. As with the question of jurisdiction, transformations in the character of elites had important effects on what Islamic law would become. The effort of local elites to maintain their authority under increased colonial pressure often led to unexpected outcomes: in Johor, these strategies included Westernisation *and* the introduction of new sources of Islamic law.³² The case of the Sultan of Johor illustrates the manner in which power was concentrated in the hands of the Malay Sultans through their co-operation with the British, but once they held authority as rulers legitimated by Islam, the Sultans themselves made important changes to Islam in their states. The Sultan of Johor, once he gained primacy (with British help), worked to establish his independence from British pressure through reforms,

which included a “Western”-style constitutional document. This Constitution not only reaffirmed the succession and strengthened the power of the monarchy, it also placed Islam at the centre of state power and ruler authority.

Different groups of Muslim elites strategised reform, used the multiple languages of the colonial period, and participated in the development of the state even as they attempted to navigate its colonial character. While it is true that local elites as a group lost much of their power to the colonial state, some Malay elites capitalised upon economic, political and strategic opportunities presented by colonial politics to rise in power. These elites played a major role in the reshaping of Islam and Malay society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and continue to do so in post-independence Malaysia. Whereas before the colonial period, Sultans were at best titular heads of state, working in conjunction with Malay chiefs, the negotiation with British power allowed the centralisation of both religious and cultural power—and hence legitimate rule—in the position of Sultan. The chiefs were sidelined and the resources by which social and political support were secured (appointments, honours, land grants) were dispensed by the Sultan.³³

The Maharajah of Johor, Abu Bakar, was a local elite who used the opportunities provided by competition among imperial powers in Southeast Asia to rise to prominence within local elite hierarchies. Once at the apex of his power, he wrought radical changes in the state, changes that reflected imperial influences at the same time that they worked to limit colonial intervention. He began as one chief among many: he requested the title Maharajah of Johore in 1873—a title unknown in Malaya previously—and although the British were reluctant to allow it, he succeeded because his support was crucial to British strategic and economic interests.³⁴ In August 1878, the Maharajah sought a change in his title to Sultan.³⁵ The Governor of the Straits Settlements’ reply was swift and unequivocal: “most undesirable to recognise Maharajah as Sultan it would be an incendiary to the whole Peninsula and . . . would greatly complicate our position”.³⁶ However, the Maharajah’s agreement was needed against Dutch and French interests in Southeast Asia, his own vast landholdings throughout Malaya would supply a route for the Malayan Railway, and his influence among the Malay rulers was unparalleled. He continued to be so important for British political and economic interests that in 1885, he was granted his request.

The wording of the Treaty of 1885 (signed not in Malaya but in London) that made the Maharajah a Sultan reveals what was at stake for both parties, and the means by which they sought to legitimise their actions.³⁷ The Sultan was made so “by the desire of his chiefs and people”, consultative language that until then had not been part of the rationales used by Malay rulers to legitimise their positions, but that now was used to appeal to British ideals of just rule as well as to key constituents within the state of Johor. The Sultan ceded the conduct of foreign policy to the British, supported the economic and strategic considerations of British policy in the Straits and made promises not to interfere in the Malay States. The Treaty invoked Malay custom to legitimise an action

that was far from customary, and then to insert it into a chain of “tradition”, made anew by colonial power and elite stratagems.

Sultan Abu Bakar was among the most “Westernised” of the Malay rulers, if his travels in Europe, his social activities and his marriages were any indication, and the changes he made to law and Islam in the state of Johor were cast in the discourse of reform and modernisation.³⁸ However, Abu Bakar’s influence among the Malay rulers, his economic power, and his diplomatic acumen, indicate that his success was far more than a measure of his Westernisation. In Malaya as elsewhere in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, local rulers often took on reform projects and Western forms of government precisely to avoid colonisation. The Sultan’s efforts to represent himself, and his state, as being capable of self-government: as sufficiently modern, wealthy, efficient, rational and enlightened, took place in the areas of law and administration in particular.

These efforts culminated, during the last year of his life, in the promulgation of the *Undang-Undang Tubuh Negeri Johor*, that detailed Johor’s autonomy, the duties of Cabinet and Legislative Council, established Islam as the state religion, and placed the Sultan as head of state—in effect, a Constitution, the first in Malaya. The document was drafted by the Sultan’s legal advisors in Singapore and his ministers. It comprised of four parts: the position and powers of the Sultan, the Council of Ministers, the State Council, and matters of justice, nomenclature and Islam.³⁹ Given the timing of the 1895 Constitution (the Sultan was ill, and died that same year), it can also be seen as an attempt to formalise state structure and the position of the Sultan and his descendants, that until then was guaranteed only by treaties signed with the British. A Constitution had more legitimacy than treaties, and could not easily be revoked or altered, especially by the British, who presented the biggest challenge to Johor state autonomy at this point.⁴⁰ However, these measures did far more than ensure the succession: they placed Islam at the centre of the state and its authority, and at the pinnacle of that authority was the Sultan. They codified and formalised Islamic commercial law and established a code of Islamic civil law.

The Sultan drew upon reforms undertaken by Ottoman rulers only a few years earlier to buttress their power against Western challenges, reforms which both “modernised” the structure of the state and institutionalised Islam. The adoption of the Majalla (the 1885 Ottoman codification of Hanafi commercial laws) in 1893, and its promulgation in 1913 as the *Undang-Undang Sivill Islam: Majalah Ahkam Johor* (Code of Islamic Civil Law), was the most significant of these reforms.⁴¹ The first printing of the Code of Islamic Civil Law in Malay in 1913 began by placing the Majalla—an Ottoman import—firmly within both Malay and Islamic tradition: “This book contains discussions of the *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudential) rulings which are derived from the *Shari’ah* of Islam which have been in use in the past by the government of Johor in the Arabic language.”⁴² The Sultan was asked for, and granted, permission for the Majalla be used as one source for the *Hukum Syara’* (Islamic law of the state).⁴³ By the time of

its second printing by the *Malayan Law Journal*, “all officers, magistrates and judges in the state of Johor” were to use the *Majalah* “in matters relating to the law of Islam”.⁴⁴

Unlike the practice in other Malay states like Perak, “matters of religion and culture” referred to commercial transactions as well as to marriage, divorce, inheritance and religious endowments. However, only those governing commercial transactions were codified, with unintended consequences: in Johor as well as in the Ottoman Empire., the codification of commercial law became contrasted against un-codified laws of marriage, inheritance and succession. “The Ottoman reformers who subjected commercial transactions to the requirements of modernity, reason, and law thus unwittingly established family life as a realm governed by tradition, sentiment, and biology.”⁴⁵ Again, the making of Islamic law involved far more than the codification or unification of shari’ah rules: the strategies by which local and colonial elites bolstered their legitimacy, administered their governments and competed against each other for influence had the effect of defining family law as religious, private and traditional, and commercial and criminal law as public, rational and modern.

The “fencing off” of areas of marriage, divorce, inheritance and worship from areas of commerce, public law and civil law, therefore, was not just a colonial imposition: once it became central to their authority, Muslim rulers continued to perpetuate the division. The establishment of administrative bodies like the Department of Religion and Education bureaucratised Islam and Muslim life further, and brought it under the formal purview of the state. Islamic religious elites became part of the state machinery as well: whereas the Mufti—the highest Islamic official in Johor—signed himself “al-Haqir” (Yang Hina; the Base/Humble) to endorse the first printing of the *Majalah*, by the time of the second printing of the *Majalah*, he signed “under Orders” (dengan perintah). At the time of first printing, the Mufti was a subject of the Sultan, and a representative of Islamic authority; by the second printing he was a functionary of the administrative state.

The Sultan of Johor’s efforts to maintain the independence of his state from British encroachment involved judicial and administrative reforms, including a Constitution that defined and legitimated his position, but also limited its scope to functioning in tandem with a state government and its officers. In the decades that followed, these measures resulted in changes in the relationship between Sultans and the other elites—like the Mufti—in the state. The power of the Sultan as guardian of Malay privilege and culture was generally enhanced by their association with Islam, and many Sultans in the Malay States took on the role of protectors of Islam and heads of religion during the colonial period.

We began with the fundamental paradox of Islamic law: a process in which the jurisdiction of Islam was limited at the same time that its authority was radically expanded. In Malaya, this process was made possible by the negotiation between local and colonial elites. Dividing jurisdiction constructed areas of

“Malay religion and culture” for the exclusive control of Malay elites: both an administrative limitation and an epistemological transformation. The further definition of religion and culture, and the elaboration of Islamic law, its scope, content and meaning, established Islamic law within the area of family law, eradicated it from the adjudication of slavery, and cemented a compromise with Malay elites in the area of land law. These elites continued to keep Islam at the centre of their power and authority, even while making reforms which seemed on the surface to be “Western” in character. “Islamic law” today is distinct from “secular” or “state” law, but also co-dependent with it—neither a divinely ordained nor a natural space, but a territory fenced off as the province of specific local elites, whose participation is in turn both maintained and limited by the state.

Conclusion

The inseparability of “Malay” from “Muslim” has become a major issue in Malaysian courts today: the case of Lina Joy illustrates the issues facing contemporary states in deciding matters of religion in law and administration.⁴⁶ Lina Joy, born into a Malay-Muslim family, declared her conversion to Christianity, applied to have that conversion registered on her national identity card, and to marry her Christian fiancé (not legally possible if she were still Muslim). Both applications were denied. Malaysia’s highest court, the Federal Court, decided on May 30, 2007 that it had no jurisdiction in the case, in effect leaving the matter of Joy’s confessional identity to the Syariah Court. Joy has not applied for a decision from the Syariah Court, arguing that her religious beliefs are a private matter, and that she is no longer bound, not being Muslim, to their authority. For Malaysian Muslims, the casting of faith is a matter deeply intertwined in legal arena and questions of law, but also with the ongoing construction of race and ethnic identity.

Malaysians are not alone in having questions of what it means to be Muslim defined in legal arena. Muslims in both Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority countries seek the shari’ah—a divinely ordained path of right conduct—in the “Islamic law” of their states. This Islamic law, however, can no longer be seen as mere translation of the will of the divine, but as part of a complex dynamic of state-making, social bargaining and individual strategies. Courts, legislation and constitutions continue to be battlegrounds where state agenda, elite interests and Muslim belief are negotiated, and where Islamic law is continually remade.

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Notes

1. Federal Constitution of Malaysia Article 160, clause 2. "Malaysia" refers to post-independence Malaysia, while "Malaya" refers to the Malay Peninsula during the British colonial period.
2. Likewise, "shari'ah" can be understood as a societal discourse which encompasses rules, institutions and human agents.
3. The question of jurisdiction has long been a central preoccupation of Islamic legal history, and the struggles between ulama and rulers throughout Islamic history are well documented. The debates about "siyasah shar'iyyah" (variously translated as "public interest," "government interest in shar'iah," and "shari'ah oriented policy") is an important example of the treatment of the question of jurisdiction among Islamic legal scholars, and within Islamic political history. In some ways, the colonial division of jurisdiction was a deliberate parallel to this model of Muslim political struggle; in others, it made marked departures.
4. The chiefs' support was needed to make agreements with the British, and to install a new Sultan: while the Sultan in each Malay state was the apex of the power structure, the chiefs played important roles in economy, society and military affairs. C. D. Cowan, *Nineteenth-Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961; J. M. Gullick, *Rulers and Residents: Influence and Power in the Malay States, 1870–1920*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992; C. N. Parkinson, *British Intervention in Malaya, 1867–1877*. Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1960. The Straits Settlements were Penang, Melaka and Singapore, procured by the East India Company between 1786 and 1826 and ruled through the Governor General.
5. Parkinson, 1960, 323–325.
6. The Sultan said, "Mr. Birch was doing what he chose with regard to the collection of taxes, and was in fact acting as if he had superior authority to him instead of being under him," Colonial Office records (henceforth, CO) 273/87: 229 (4.7.1876): Long Mahnoon testimony. "They [the chiefs] spoke as if they thought that the white men had no right to collect taxes in the country. On another day I heard Abdullah say that unless the white people were turned out of Bandar Bahru they (the Sultan and chiefs) could not get the taxes" (ibid.). The Sultan's assessment of Birch's attitude was borne out by reports sent by Birch himself to the Colonial Office: "It really concerns us little what were the old customs of the country, nor do I consider they are worthy of any consideration in dealing with the present taxation of the country." CO 273/88: 518–549 (14.12.1874).
7. CO 273/87, Testimony of Mohamed Essaack (scribe and translator for the Sultan and chiefs), 108–117: The Sultan kept asking, "what was the use of his being Sultan, if he was to be under the control of the Resident, saying that according to the Pangkor Treaty, the Resident was to be under him."
8. CO 273/87, 217–218 (6.7.1876): Testimony of Indoot, one of the Sultan's boatmen: Sultan Abdullah gathered the chiefs and said, "he wished to get rid of Mr Birch, because of his relations with him regarding the government of the country, because it had been agreed that Mr Birch should be under him, and that now "our positions are reversed—slaves run away to him and he will not give them up, he puts people in gaol without consulting me (one of whom was a relation of one of his concubines) and sent notices to the chiefs."
9. CO 273/87, 282–295 (5.6.1876): Testimony of Pangulu Mat Akib (in service with Birch since November 1874).

10. F. Swettenham, *British Malaya: An Account of the Origin and Progress of British Influence in Malaya*. London: J. Lane, 1907, 246.
11. 16.7.85, Correspondence: From Kuala Selangor District Collector to his superior the Selangor Resident (J. P. Rodger).
12. 28.7.85, Correspondence: Resident to District Collector.
13. 21.7.85, Correspondence: Resident to District Collector; 24.7.85: Kuala Selangor District Collector to Selangor Resident; 28.7.85: Resident to District Collector.
14. 36 Fatimah & Ors v. Logan & Ors 1871 1 Kyshe's Reports 255, cited in Salleh Buang, *Sejarah Undang-Undang Malaysia: Kes Dan Material* [the History of Malaysian Law: Cases and Material]. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1996.
15. Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1875, in H. S. Barlow, *Swettenham*. Kuala Lumpur: Southdene, 1995, 127.
16. 8, Michael Anderson, "Islamic Law and the Colonial Encounter in British India," in *Institutions and Ideologies: A SOAS South Asia Reader*, ed. David and Peter Robb Arnold. London: Curzon, 1993, 165–185.
17. This trend continues in contemporary Malaysia, where practices of inheritance in some states are shifting towards what are now understood to be "more Islamic" divisions of property, favouring male inheritance. I. Hussin, *The Politics of Islamic Law: Local Elites and Colonial Authority in Malaya, India and Egypt*. Ph.D. Thesis: Department of Political Science, University of Washington, 2008.
18. E. N. Taylor, "Malay Family Law", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XV (1948) Part 1, 41–42: 1867 Leic. 462.
19. Ibid. "It has repeatedly been decided as a legal doctrine that our principles cannot be applied to this community whenever untoward injustice and cruelty might result from such an application."
20. One example of Malay adat (customary practice) which was more equitable to women is the concept of *harta sepencarian* (joint marital property), which allows a wife to claim a portion of property gained during the course of a marriage, even if it was earned by the husband. A 1907 Perak ruling limited harta sepencarian to divorce proceedings, meaning that the concept could not benefit women except in a divorce.
21. Minute, Perak State Council—18.1.1907.
22. Talal Asad, "Thinking about Secularism and Law in Egypt," Vol. 2, *Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World Occasional Paper*. Leiden, Netherlands: ISIM, 2001, 8–9.
23. Ibid.
24. Where the doctrine of equity worked to achieve a kind of natural justice, especially in cases where no positive law was clear, the doctrine of repugnance allowed British judges to disregard or even prohibit local practices which conflicted with their understandings of natural justice and right conduct. Philippa Levine argues that repugnance worked to uphold conservative British and Christian values in both Britain and the colonies, and that the use of repugnance was especially frequent in cases relating to women, gender and sex. "What's British about Gender and Empire? The Problem of Exceptionalism," 275, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 27 (2) (2007): 273–282.
25. Ridzuan Awang, *Undang-undang Tanah Islam: Pendekatan Perbandingan* [The Land Law of Islam: A Comparative Approach]. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1994, 7.
26. Roff places this contradiction at the heart of the British project in Malaya: "For the officials on the spot, the primary end . . . of British control was the creation of

- political stability and ordered government of a Western type, as a necessary precondition of and context for rapid... development of the country's natural resources. Secondary to this, but providing a moral rationale for the whole, was an expressed concern for the welfare and advancement of the Malay people within the framework of traditional Malay society. The contradiction inherent in these aims, the one impossible of realisation in terms of existing Malay institutions and the other dedicated to their preservation, led to a fundamental dichotomy in British policy seen at every turn in Malaya's colonial history." William Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967, 12.
27. 57, Awang, 1994.
 28. W. E. Maxwell, *Memorandum on the Introduction of a Land Code in the Native States in the Malay Peninsula*. Singapore: Government Printers, 1894.
 29. Introduced in South Australia in 1858, the Torrens title system established a state registry of land titles and indisputable land ownership rights to those registered. "The result was a system of tenure which provided the cultivator with the right of perpetual occupancy and power of alienation, subject to the reassessment of land at regular intervals. This was an ingenious and practical marriage of Malay land tenure to modern land principles." Lim Teck Ghee, *Origins of a Colonial Economy*. Penang: Universiti Sains Malaya, 1976, 16.
 30. W. E. Maxwell, *Memorandum on the Introduction of a Land Code in the Native States in the Malay Peninsula*. Singapore: Government Printers, 1894.
 31. Ibid.
 32. The state of Johor is an important example for this analysis because it illustrates the diverse ways in which colonialism changed the Muslim state. Johor did not accept a British Resident until 1914, and so it did not properly come under the category of a colonised state until the last decades of British imperialism in Malaya. The shadow of British power and influence loomed large over Johor, hemmed in as it was between the Straits Settlements (Singapore, directly to the south of Johor, had been a Crown Colony since 1819) and the Federated Malay States (beginning with Perak in 1874).
 33. Muhammad Kamil Awang, *The Sultan and the Constitution*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1998, 29. Awang cites: CO 273/445, November 30, 1894; CO 273/281, September 11, 1902, CO 273/189, August 2, 1893.
 34. His initial post was Temenggong of Johore. The Maharajah of Johore was formerly known as Dato' Temenggong Abu Bakar, the son of Dato' Temenggong Daing Ibrahim, to whom the control of Johor was ceded under the terms of a treaty signed in 1855 between the British in Singapore and Sultan Ali of Johor. Nesamalar Nadarajah, *Johore and the Origins of British Control, 1895–1914*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Arenabuku, 2000.
 35. Straits Settlements: Secret 39 1878.
 36. Ibid., Secret 41 1878.
 37. "Whereas His Highness the Maharajah of Johore has made known to the Governor of the Straits Settlements that it is the desire of his chiefs and people that he assume the title of Sultan, it is further agreed that, in consideration of the loyal friendship and constant affection His Highness has shown to the Government of Her Majesty the Queen and Empress, and of the stipulations contained in this Memorandum, he and his heirs and successors, lawfully succeeding according to Malay custom, shall in future be acknowledged as His Highness the Sultan of the State and territory of Johore, and shall be so addressed." CO 882/4/22, 1885.

38. The Johor Royal Museum shows portraits of the Sultan in white and black tie, and posed with his wives, one of whom was English, and the other of Acehnese-Dutch descent. He died in 1895 in London.
39. 57, Sahari Jantan, *Mesyuarat Kerajaan Johor 1895–1914* [The Johor State Council 1895–1914]. Thesis: Jabatan Sejarah Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Bangi, 1975.
40. Ibid.
41. Abdul Jalil Borhan, *Majalah Ahkam Johor: Kod Undang-Undang Sivil Islam Kerajaan Negeri Johor 1331H/1913M* [Majalah Ahkam Johor: The Islamic Civil Code of the State of Johor, 1331H/1913AD]. Johor: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Skudai, 2002. Borhan traces the Majalla from its compilation by a body chaired by the Ottoman Minister of Justice Ahmed Jewdet Pasha and overseen by the Shaikh al-Islam, its adoption by the Ottoman Sultan in 1885, then by the Johor Sultan Abu Bakar in 1893, and its translation into Malay by his son Sultan Ibrahim in 1913, making it the formal guide for hukum syara' ("Islamic law") in Johor.
42. Printed by Matba' Khairiyyah in Muar in 1913.
43. Borhan, 2002, vi; Correspondence between Sultan Ibrahim, the Mufti of Johor (Abdul Qadir bin Mohsin al-Attas) and Dato Pemangku Setiausaha Kerajaan Johor (Bil. 998/13, 29.11.1913).
44. al-Mansor Adabi, *Malayan Law Journal* 2 (1932). "In relation to Sections 49 and 57 of the Johor Constitution, Sultan Ibrahim with the agreement of judicial and religious personnel approves the Majalah Ahkam Johor for use by all officers, magistrates and judges in the state of Johor in matters relating to the law of Islam."
45. Jane Collier, "Intertwined Histories: Islamic Law and Western Imperialism." *Law & Society Review*, vol. 28, no. 2 (1994): 395–408.
46. Suresh Nathan, "Lina Joy v. Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan & Anor., High Court Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur (18 April 2001)," *Current Law Journal Supplementary Series*, vol. 6 (2004): 242–272; W. A. Sharif, "Lina Joy v. Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan & Ors, Court of Appeal, Putrajaya (19 September 2005)," *Current Law Journal*, vol. 4 (2005): 666–699.

8

Christian Conversion and Ethnic Identity in East Kalimantan

Jennifer Connolly

This chapter will show the many ways that Christian mission, Dutch colonial policy, and the postcolonial Indonesian state helped to redefine the Dayak community of East Kalimantan. This change is not surprising as Christian missions and colonial policies have often resulted in a redrawing of community boundaries. Whether or not converts experience psychological changes or engage in a rational reordering of beliefs, the decision to convert always entails a “new or reconceptualized social identity”.¹ For many Southeast Asian minorities this social identity is an ethnicized one. Marginalized relative to a dominant ethnic Other, conversion becomes a way to maintain their boundaries and strengthen their identity as a unique cultural group.²

Language is key to these transformations. Scholars working in Asia and Africa have shown how missionization is implicated in the production of ethno-linguistic identities.³ Propelled by the need to avoid religious competition, missions frequently marked out bounded territories for evangelization on the basis of linguistic differences.⁴ Having demarcated a mission field, missionaries sought to learn local languages and render them into a standardized, written form suitable for evangelical purposes. Effective evangelization depends on communication. It is “listening to the gospel which initiates lost souls into the Word, the language of God”.⁵ Furthermore, for Protestants, the key to becoming a Christian is seen as entering into a personal, unmediated relationship with God. Doing so requires both a familiarity with God’s Word as revealed in the Bible and an on-going prayerful conversation with Him, a conversation dependent upon knowing how to speak with God and understand His reply.⁶ Learning and codifying vernacular languages thus lay at the center of the evangelical enterprise. Through mission school textbooks, Bible readers, and hymnals, Protestant missionaries standardized local dialects, producing ethno-linguistic nationalisms, and pulling individuals into linguistic communities where previously none may have existed.⁷

Ethnicity has also played a crucial role in the conversion of Dayaks. As with many Southeast Asian minorities, Christianity offers them a way to retain an autonomous ethnic identity, while satisfying social and political demands to

adhere to a world religion. Conversion, along with state policies, plays a role in reducing boundaries between Dayak groups, helping to unite them under a pan-Dayak ethnic identity. But the Dayak case also diverges from the usual pattern. In contrast to Steedly's portrayal of the Karo Batak or Aragon's portrayal of the Tobaku, "Dayakness" is not an ethno-linguistic identity.⁸ Dayaks do not share a common language and sub-ethnic group identities continue to be of importance. A major reason why a pan-Dayak identity rather than a series of linguistically defined sub-ethnic identities is important for the contemporary Dayak community was the decision of the Christian Missionary Alliance (CMA), an American Protestant mission active in the region since the early twentieth century, not to limit their mission field to a single linguistically defined Dayak sub-ethnic group. For reasons which I will describe below, they chose instead to propagate a national, multi-ethnic Indonesian church.

As a result, even as their Christian identity has made it easier for Dayaks to see their commonalities and unite on the basis of a pan-Dayak ethnic identity, this same Christian identity has also helped to create ties with other Christian groups. As Oscar Salemink noted in a recent paper, too close a focus on Christian conversion's role in the "religious profiling of ethnic boundaries" can blind scholars to the ways in which Christian mission and conversion can create larger ties, a point also developed by others.⁹ Just as converts may initially be unaware of what conversion entails and are only slowly brought to a "more radical and unanticipated resocialization", so a religion embraced partially as a way of reconstituting ethnic boundaries may enmesh converts in larger ties and communities in unforeseen ways.¹⁰ As I will argue below, the policies of the mission and the postcolonial state have produced a Christian elite which has emphasized a pan-Dayak identity over that of Dayak sub-ethnic identities. Thus while Dayaks' decision to convert to Christianity was partially motivated by a desire to differentiate themselves from Muslims, they have also found that they have unexpectedly become part of a larger Christian community.

Colonial interventions: Emerging Dayak ethnic consciousness

During the precolonial period, it was religion and geography, not ethnicity, which were critical in the formation of identity. East Kalimantan's indigenous inhabitants can be divided into two groups, the traditionally dominant, coastal Muslim Malays and Dayaks, the animist inhabitants of the interior. Both Malays and Dayaks consisted of a fragmented welter of groups, neither of which was united by a common language nor a pan-ethnic identity.¹¹ For the Malay groups, the primary identity marker was Islam. Those of the interior did not collectively identify themselves as Dayak, but rather belonged to hundreds of small groups whose identity was derived from geographical features or directional terms such as upriver or hill.¹² These labels, which might be applied to either a single village or a larger riverine grouping, were not mutually exclusive and could form a set of nested identities.

As is the case with many other highland minorities in Southeast Asia, boundaries between Dayak groups were porous and flexible. Migration, cultural exchange and assimilation, marriage, intergroup feuding, and war contributed to the processes of fusion and fission which complicated identity in the region.¹³ Consequently, the boundaries between Dayak groups were shifting and ambiguous, with individuals often speaking multiple languages and claiming affiliation with more than one social group. While there were some supra-local federations, Dayak groups did not cooperate on a collective basis and did not have any sense of themselves as having a pan-ethnic identity. Sometimes united by trade and marriage alliances, Dayak groups were also divided by warfare and headhunting.

While the boundaries between these Dayak groups were relatively porous, this was not the case with the Dayaks and Malays. The two groups have a long history of interaction through involvement in tributary relations, intermarriage, and the international trade in forest products, in which the Malay Sultanates were middlemen and Dayaks provided the products.¹⁴ For Dayaks, conversion to Islam meant greater access to the political and economic power wielded by Malays. However, to convert to Islam meant that one had to “masuk Melayu” or become Malay, changing one’s language, diet, material culture, and social ties. As such, it is religion which has become the pre-eminent regional identity marker.

Despite a three hundred year presence, it was not until 1911 that a combination of military conquest and negotiation gave the Dutch colonial state decisive control over Kalimantan. Dayaks experienced this increased colonial power in the form of a more oppressive military and police presence. The Dutch sought to monopolize economic activity in the area, eliminating rivals, and ensuring the stability necessary for economic success.¹⁵ As part of this effort to establish stability, they banned headhunting, an important component of Dayak political and ritual life, and warfare between Dayak groups, jailing or exiling transgressors. Even as the Sultanates were brought to heel, the threat that Malays posed to the Dutch state loomed larger than ever in the eyes of colonial administrators. The form that this threat took was primarily that of an active, rebellious Islam. By Dutch perceptions, Islam had the ability to unite Dayaks and Malays. Adding urgency to this objective was their evolutionist assumption that weaker animistic religions would inevitably be undermined by world religions and that, unless Dayaks were offered an alternative, they would turn to Islam.¹⁶

The Dutch wished to thwart this possibility by limiting contact between Malays and Dayaks and placing restrictions on the ability of Muslims to enter the interior.¹⁷ While Dayaks principally experienced the colonial state through Malay intermediaries, the Malay Sultanates themselves, once the most powerful polities in the region, were steadily co-opted and undermined by the Dutch. As a result, traditional trade patterns were eclipsed and the political and economic ties which bound the two groups began to unravel. These colonial interventions altered identity and social relations in Kalimantan. Even as the gap between

Malays and Dayaks grew, the suppression of headhunting and warfare fostered unity between Dayak groups. It was during this period that the term Dayak itself came into common use. By treating these various groups as members of a single cultural and ethnic entity, the Dutch unwittingly promoted a sense of such an identity among the Dayak themselves. The unprecedented 1894 peace conference among Dayak leaders at Tumbang Anoi, engineered by the Dutch, strengthened this incipient ethnic consciousness.

The many into the one: Mission schools and language

Even as the colonial state was exerting greater authority, the first Christian missions were being established in East Kalimantan. This timing was no coincidence. By the first decades of the twentieth century, the colonial project and its goals has come under increasing scrutiny at home. The result was the initiation of the Ethical Policy, under which the purpose of colonialism was not to be only the economic exploitation of the East Indies, but the promotion of educational, economic, and welfare benefits for its residents. While the Ethical Policy was ultimately unsuccessful in achieving its stated goals, this focus on humanitarian matters awakened a fresh interest in the state of Dutch subjects' souls. Missionization, hitherto of little concern to the Dutch colonial state, emerged as an important tool for the civilization and pacification of its subjects and, by the turn of the century, new mission fields began to open throughout the Indonesian archipelago.¹⁸

While the Catholic Church initiated Christian missionary work in East Kalimantan in 1907, it was the CMA, a nondenominational American mission, which was particularly successful. Since its arrival in 1929, the CMA has largely shaped Christianity as it is practiced by Protestant Dayaks, many of whom remain members until the present day.¹⁹ After a slow start, the mission would announce its first 278 converts two years later. Its success grew with each passing year, with missionaries reporting 3543 baptisms in 1934 alone. Compared to many other Indonesian mission fields, this was a remarkable conversion rate.²⁰ This success can be attributed to a number of factors including the CMA's evangelization strategies. As was the case with other missions, one of the most effective of these was the establishment of schools.²¹ As colonialism undermined traditional forms of knowledge and authority in East Kalimantan, education became an important new resource.

However, at the turn of the century there was a severe lack of schools in east and south Kalimantan. Like their legal system, the Dutch colonial education system had two tiers, a top tier of Dutch-language schools to which only a few indigenous children were accepted and a second tier of Malay-language schools. In 1890, south and east Kalimantan had 21 Malay-language primary schools. By 1937 that number had grown to 375 schools attended by 8 percent of the local children between ages five and fifteen.²² These schools were largely inaccessible to the remote Dayaks due to their location, poverty, and inability to speak

Malay. Given this educational dearth, Christian missions became a way to fill this void.

But missionaries and the missionized did not always agree on the use and significance of education. For local people (converted and unconverted alike), mission schools were a practical way of gaining the knowledge necessary to understand colonial interests and find employment.²³ For missionaries, schools were a foundation for proselytization, attracting potential converts and further enhancing the understanding of Christianity among converts. While Jean and John Comaroff have persuasively argued that the introduction of literacy through mission schools was a key element in the preparation of converts to labor, it is also clear that this was generally not the missionaries' intention.²⁴ Missionaries did not seek to provide the colonial state with a willing labor force; indeed in certain cases, they actively strove to isolate converts from the capitalist regime.²⁵ Even when they employed practical methods, such as the establishment of schools, in the end, the missionaries clearly understood their primary task to be the saving of souls. Given this gap in expectations, schools often emerge as vital, yet fraught, sites in the mission encounter.

When Robert Jaffray opened the CMA's East Indies mission in 1929, one of his first tasks was to establish a Bible College at the mission headquarters in Makassar, Sulawesi.²⁶ The CMA missionaries assigned to the East Kalimantan field quickly set up local schools, with the first one opening in Tanjungseler in 1931. In 1933, a second CMA school for Dayak boys was opened in Melak. Operating three nights a week, attendance at this school usually numbered about 15 boys. In addition, missionaries often opened village schools, which operated under the tutelage of student-evangelists, usually from the neighboring island of Sulawesi. During evangelical tours, they also ran short-term bible schools. However, despite opening these schools, the CMA was largely uninterested in education as a goal in itself. Like many evangelical churches at that time, the CMA was critical of mainstream Protestant denominations' increasing focus on the "social gospel" or humanitarian efforts, believing strongly that evangelism should center strictly on winning converts and saving souls.

Nonetheless the mission recognized the power of education as an evangelical tool. Through the schools, they intended to accomplish a variety of goals. First, they hoped that the schools would assist the missionaries in learning the local Dayak languages and dialects, since linguistic competence was considered necessary for effective evangelization. Second, the missionaries wished to instill basic literacy so that converts would have unmediated access to the Bible, an important consideration given the Protestant emphasis on "the supremacy of written texts (that is, the books of the Bible), interpreted by individual consciences".²⁷ Third, the schools with their focus on Christian teachings were considered as a key method of deepening the religious knowledge and commitment of students. Fourth, they hoped that the most outstanding students would continue at the Bible college in Makassar, eventually returning as ministers capable of

independent evangelical efforts. Lastly, they saw Christian schools as a way of weakening or counteracting Muslim influence.

In the Dutch East Indies the pairing of mission schools and emergent ethnicities was partially the result of colonial state policy, which aimed to eliminate religious competition by assigning missions to different regions and, more significantly, due to missions' own policies. As Mary Steedly and Rita Smith Kipp have shown for the Karo Batak and Lorraine Aragon has shown for the Tobaku, missions, hoping to avoid religious competition, frequently defined their fields on the basis of a linguistic essentialism that they believed corresponded to a bounded ethnic community.²⁸ According to Mary Steedly, "such evangelical partitioning practices were understood as simply transcribing a preexisting cultural reality onto a denominational map".²⁹ Missions divided the field by vernacular languages to avoid the use of Malay which, as the language of Muslims, was seen as ill suited to deepening Christian understanding and, more importantly, would encourage contact with Muslims. The result was a pairing of Christian missions with linguistic groups.

While CMA missionaries were also interested in the use of vernacular languages in evangelization, two factors prevented their exclusive use. First was the large number and variety of Dayak sub-ethnic groups living in Kalimantan. Depending on how they are defined, there are at least 200 different Dayak sub-ethnic groups, with the smallest sub-ethnic groups numbering around 3000 members and the largest over 40,000. Unrestricted by colonial authorities and facing competition only from the Catholic Church, which was primarily focused on the Mahakam River region, the CMA had free rein to evangelize among the entire Dayak population. Moreover, the evangelical CMA, believing that the Second Coming of Christ depended upon the Christianization of the world, felt a tremendous urgency to accomplish this goal as rapidly as possible. Thus, rather than imposing linguistic limits on the mission field, they chose to work among as many Dayak sub-ethnic groups as possible. While they sought to learn local languages, the polyglot nature of their mission field demanded that they use Malay, the preferred *lingua franca* of traders operating through the Indonesian archipelago for millennia.³⁰

Second, their institutional interest in building an indigenous, national church, independent from the American mother church and evangelical in nature, meant that the CMA mission could not focus on a single-ethnic group or island. Thus while their headquarters and Bible college was based in Sulawesi and the majority of their evangelical activities initially took place in Kalimantan, they soon spread their operations to Irian Jaya at the opposite end of the archipelago. Complicating the attainment of this ambitious goal was a lack of money and personnel. In 1934, the CMA had only four male missionaries and one missionary family in East Kalimantan, a region covering 211,440 square kilometers. Both as a matter of necessity and mission policy, the missionaries knew that accomplishing their objectives would require "indigenization", the production of a knowledgeable core of indigenous ministers and evangelists.

Given the multi-ethnic focus of their work, the Malay language became critical to achieving these goals. Dutch, the language of the colonial state, was unknown to the CMA's American missionaries as well as most Dayaks and therefore was not an option. English, the American missionaries' native tongue, was also foreign to the Dayaks and of little use in a Dutch colony. Unlike other missions operating in the East Indies, using vernacular languages was unappealing because their mission field encompassed many islands and ethnic groups, including the various Dayak sub-ethnic groups. That left Malay. As the vast majority of Dayaks, like most other remote non-Muslim Indonesian people, were unable to speak the Malay language, a central task of the mission schools was teaching it. Malay was also the language of instruction at the Makassar Bible college where in a typical year the multi-ethnic student body spoke 14 different languages and dialects. Just as Malay, known as Indonesian after Independence, would become key to the postcolonial state's efforts to create an Indonesian nation, so too was it crucial to mission efforts to create a multi-ethnic national church.

Arguably, one of the most important legacies of the CMA has been the building of a national multi-ethnic church rather than an ethno-linguistic one. This church, now fully independent, is known as the Indonesian Gospel Tabernacle Church (Gereja Kemah Injil Indonesia, GKII) and has some two thousand congregations throughout Indonesia including three hundred in East Kalimantan. The use of Malay as the church's common language has meant that ethnic origin was never a factor in church membership or participation. Furthermore, given the CMA's beginnings as a nondenominational ecumenical organization, membership in the church and attendance of the Bible college was not restricted to Christians directly converted by CMA missionaries. Consequently, Christians from areas such as northern Sulawesi and Flores where the CMA was not yet established were active in mission and evangelical roles from the first. The diversity of the Makassar Bible college's student body as well as the frequent transfer of church workers to areas throughout Indonesia reinforced the sense of belonging to a universal, multi-ethnic Christian community. As church workers traveled to conferences throughout the archipelago, they gained a sense of themselves as a particular kind of person, a Christian united with other Christians in a community that transcends local ties.

Educational opportunities created the Dayak elite, but the CMA was only the beginning. Through their schools, encouragement of education, and the providing of pastoral employment, the CMA helped to create this educated elite. However, it should be noted that the CMA was not the primary educator of most Dayaks. In 1940 after 11 years in the East Indies, there were only 85 Dayaks attending the Makassar Bible college and 22 student-evangelists working in the field, representing a tiny fraction of Dayaks. The CMA's restricted, though crucial, role in education was due to several factors including limited funds and personnel and a disinterest in social concerns and academic subjects. Furthermore, after Indonesian Independence, the mission relinquished their primary

and secondary schools to the state, keeping control over only their Bible colleges. Thus it is the postcolonial state that has provided educational opportunities for the majority of Dayaks.

The postcolonial state's religious policies have played an equally critical role in creating a Christian elite. Rejecting a secularist separation of the state and religion, the Indonesian state has chosen to be actively involved in religious affairs. Its control of the religious marketplace has been particularly strengthened through the Department of Religion's 1962 decision to recognize only five official religions: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. As official religions, these receive state support and dedicated departments within the Ministry of Religion. State law further requires that students should attend classes in their chosen religion and that applicants for civil service jobs, including teaching and the military, be members of a state-sanctioned religion; nor could the individual always opt out. Under the New Order, atheism was equated with communism and thus effectively with treason. As such, not belonging to an approved religion is to risk state disapproval and, in the immediate aftermath of the New Order's tumultuous rise to power in 1965, even death. Thus the state has ensured not only the attractiveness of conversion to a world religion, but also construes such a religion as integral to citizenship.

These policies have increased the popularity of Christian conversion, particularly among educated Dayaks. At school, Dayak youth generally choose to receive religious instruction in Christianity for reasons that include familiarity with it and resistance to Islam. Given the dearth of secondary schools in the interior, acquisition of higher education usually requires students to travel to urban areas. The combination of religious education classes, isolation from an animist community, and the greater ease of practising a world religion in an urban setting has been an effective spur to conversion. Not surprisingly, considering the connection between education and conversion, the majority of the Dayak middle-class elite are Christians. Furthermore, given the historically limited involvement of Dayaks in business, a major route for Dayaks to enter the middle class is through the civil service, which requires membership in a world religion. The result has been conducive to individual conversion and to the rise of a Christian elite.

While the postcolonial state's policies on and attitudes toward religion have unified Dayaks, they have proven to be more divisive in regard to the relationship between Dayaks and Muslims. Although the Indonesian state does purport to treat religions equally, this is clearly not the case. Like the colonial state, the Indonesian state has long been wary of Islam. But, given Islam's power as the religion of the majority of Indonesians, the state has been forced to seek some kind of accommodation with it. The result has been both an embrace and a spurning of Islam. To the disappointment of some, the state has rejected the possibility of an Islamic state and has sought to co-opt and de-politicize Islam.

Effectively exiled from the political sphere by President Suharto in the 1970s, some Muslim leaders have chosen to develop a *dakwah* or revitalization

movement, which seeks to deepen the faith of Muslims and proselytize to non-Muslims. Suharto's New Order state proved supportive of these efforts, pouring money into the building of mosques, prayer halls, and schools, particularly in areas viewed as weakly Muslim. During this period, the number of Muslims employed by the government as teachers in Islamic and public schools as well as staff in the Department of Religion proliferated and the Muslim sector of the Department of Religion became the largest and best financed.³¹ Fueling this state-supported Islamic efflorescence was Suharto's decision to court Islam during the 1990s in order to bolster his power base. This sectarian trawling, as Robert Hefner has termed it, has exacerbated differences between Christians and Muslims in a way that has surpassed those achieved by colonial and mission policies.

A new kind of community: Schools and the formation of a Dayak elite

As I learned in 2000–2001 while conducting fieldwork on Christian conversion among urban Dayaks, the importance of a new, generalized pan-Dayak ethnic identity can particularly be seen in the proliferation of nongovernmental organizations devoted to promoting Dayaks' rights. This phenomenon has been triggered by national politics in many ways. Having acceded to the Indonesian Presidency in 1967, Suharto pursued a development-oriented policy aimed at increasing foreign investment. With its rich resources in petroleum and timber, East Kalimantan became central to achieving this goal. As multinational companies invested heavily in the region, local people, particularly Dayaks, found themselves largely excluded from the river of profits that flowed to the national coffers. At the same time, the population exploded as people from across the archipelago migrated to the province, drawn by the booming economy and government relocation schemes. As a result, Dayaks have found themselves doubly marginalized, lacking access to the exploitation of resources and faced with a swelling population of migrants, many of whom were Muslims.

Given the small number of Dayaks, it is of limited use for them to organize on the basis of sub-ethnic identities. Faced with the growing power of other ethnic groups, Dayaks have realized that they need to unite if their voices are to be heard. As a result, a number of organizations have sprung up seeking to champion the rights of Dayaks as defined according to a generalized Dayak identity. One of the most important of these groups is the East Kalimantan Dayak Alliance or Persekutuan Dayak Kalimantan Timur (PDKT). Created in 1993, the PDKT aims to improve the political and economic status of all Dayaks regardless of sub-ethnic affiliations. In interviews and brochures, PDKT leaders point out that it was their marginalization in the face of heavy Muslim migration that raised their awareness of the need to organize under a pan-Dayak identity. Already facing discrimination, Dayaks fear that, unless they unite under the banner of a pan-Dayak ethnicity, they will be left further behind.

As a spokesman told me, "Currently, they (the sub-ethnic groups) know that if they do not unite, they will be shoved aside. So now they have agreed to unite in confronting this era of globalization so that they will be stronger."

It is the urban Christian elite that has formed the PDKT and that is concerned with the issue of pan-Dayak solidarity. While a number of Dayak animists and Muslims are also involved in these issues, the majority are Christians. The result is a Christian element in meetings of the PDKT. As Anne Schiller has pointed out, even the PDKT's choice of name has Christian overtones, given that leaders used the word *perseketuan*, which is largely associated with Christian groups, rather than the more religiously neutral term, *persatuan*.³² Furthermore, Christian clergy often lead prayers at PDKT meetings. In interviews people stress that it is their Christian faith that has united the different Dayak groups and allowed them to work together. Outside of PDKT functions, Dayak social networks often revolve around church and religious meetings and employ a Christian discourse, particularly when they discuss their community.

This discourse of Christian equality and brotherhood has been important in building a sense of Christian community. As an ecumenical, nondenominational religious association, the CMA's missionaries emphasized that all Christians are members of one family, the family of God. By accepting Christ as their savior, converts were said to become God's children "no longer aliens, no longer afar off, no longer strangers, but through the Blood brought nigh by Jesus Christ".³³ Within this Christian family, there is no hierarchy; all are equal in God's eyes. Spiritual kinship overcomes ethnic and national ties, creating a new religious community whose boundaries include all Christians. Along with kinship, this Christian discourse emphasizes the need for love and peace. Missionaries taught that God loves Dayaks and that, as members of God's family, they need to love one another and other Christians regardless of race or nationality. Indeed it is love that converts consider to be paradigmatic of Christianity. In conversion narratives converts stress the ways in which Christianity has changed them and for many the most crucial change is in regard to love. Informants say that converts become more loving like little children and that since conversion they now love all other Christians. Typical is the following that a 53-year-old minister said to me in the course of an interview.

Frankly my feelings have changed since becoming a Christian. I now regard all people as my siblings. All Dayaks are siblings because they are Christian. They are also siblings with other Christians. If you are one faith, then you are related. For example, you are my little sister because you are Christian. In fact the first time that I became Christian I felt that all people on the face of the earth were my siblings.

The production of a common identity among converts is also assisted by the learning of the Christian salvation narrative and the insertion of themselves within it, which produces a certain kind of supernatural imagination and

emotional vocabulary.³⁴ This Christian identity has helped unite the various Dayak sub-ethnic groups with each other and with other national and international groups. A particularly good illustration of the boundary-dissolving capacity of the Christian kinship idiom was a Christmas pageant held by one of the churches I regularly attended. While the majority of the congregation's members were Dayak, other ethnic groups were also in attendance. In the pageant representatives from each of these 18 ethnic groups were asked to come in native costume, bearing a traditional food as a gift to the baby Jesus in his manger. As an American, I was asked to represent the American ethnic group. While I did not have a native costume, I did bring bread, the food that most Indonesians associate with the West. The congregation was very proud of the diversity of its membership, which provided proof of its status as a multi-ethnic national church.

This theme of multi-ethnic Christian unity was repeated in interviews and church services. Church members were at pains to point out that the Indonesian Gospel Tabernacle Church (*Gereja Kemah Injil Indonesia*) is not a Dayak church, despite having this reputation in the province, but a national one, welcoming all ethnic groups. This desire to emphasize links with other national and international Christian groups is not surprising considering that the urban Christian Dayak community with which I worked is an ethnic and religious minority in a largely Muslim country. By banding together and by claiming brotherhood with the international Christian community, especially that of America and Europe, the Dayak sub-ethnic groups boost their numbers and lay claim to the power and prestige of these groups, thus giving them a basis on which to contest local Muslim dominance.

Conclusion

Like so many other groups, Dayaks have found that conversion has wrought significant changes in how they conceive of their community and their relationship with others. However, while many missions implemented policies that resulted in the production of ethno-linguistic identities, this has not been the case with the CMA. Instead, bent on creating a national, multi-ethnic church, the CMA strove to overcome parochial ties, including as many groups as possible rather than focusing on a single linguistically defined community. Thus the missionaries employed a variety of strategies aimed at persuading converts that they belonged not just to a local sub-ethnic group, but more importantly to a world-wide community of religious believers. In doing so, the mission caused Dayaks to rethink definitions of community and belonging.

One result was that Dayak sub-ethnic groups were able to see their points of commonality and were given a Christian discourse through which to express these feelings of belonging. While the growth of a pan-Dayak identity can be attributed to a number of factors, not least of which are colonial and postcolonial state policies and East Kalimantan's increased participation in a global

economy, it seems clear that missionization also played a part. Beyond giving Dayaks a sense of common religious identity, the mission did this by creating a Christian elite that has been in the forefront of pressing demands for pan-Dayak rights. State religious policies have had a similar effect.

However, even as boundaries between Dayak sub-ethnic groups have been loosened, those between Dayaks and Muslims have been tightened. In doing so, Dayaks resemble other Southeast Asian minority groups that use conversion as a way of maintaining their cultural identity in relation to a more powerful ethnic neighbor. Such "religious profiling of ethnic boundaries" highlights the ways that ethnic and religious identities are conflated, a point also made in this volume by Donald Sutton and Kang Xiaofei.³⁵ Such a conflation is nothing new in the East Kalimantan context where, for Dayaks, converting to Islam meant being absorbed into the Malay ethnic community. However, despite a resemblance between the way that religion was conceived before missionization and afterwards, there are also critical differences.

In the earlier period, religious affiliation was a matter of public interest. To become Muslim was to align one's self with the powerful Malay Sultanates, giving access to their influence at the price of losing one's ties with the Dayak community. Christian missionaries introduced the idea that conversion is, instead, a matter of private belief, a personal choice. By not having a state religion and by allowing citizens to choose their own religion, the postcolonial state has also championed the idea of religion as a private choice. Yet clearly religion is not really a private matter in Indonesia. Where the state is so intimately involved with religious choice and where these decisions have serious consequences for converts' educational and occupational options, then the mere fact of belonging to a religion is a public, political matter. Thus mission and state policies have had the effect of redefining religion in Indonesia as both a privatized choice and an important political statement.

Notes

1. Robert Hefner, "Introduction: World Building and the Rationality of Conversion", in *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, ed. Robert Hefner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 17.
2. Robert Hefner, "Introduction: World Building and the Rationality of Conversion", in *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, ed. Robert Hefner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Cornelia Kammerer, "Customs and Christian Conversion among Akha Highlanders of Burma and Thailand." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 27(2) (1990): 277–291. Charles Keyes, "Being Protestant Christians in Southeast Asian Worlds." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 27(2) (1990): 280–292. Rita Smith Kipp, *Disassociated Identities: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in an Indonesian Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993). Oscar Salemink, "The King of Fire and Vietnamese Ethnic Policy in the Central Highlands", in *Development or Domestication? Indigenous Peoples of Southeast Asia*, ed. Don N. McCaskill and Ken Kampe (Chiang

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3. For Asia, see the following: Mary Steedly, "Importance of Proper Names: Language and 'National' Identity in Colonial Karoland." *American Ethnologist* 23(3) (1996): 447–475; Lorraine Aragon, "Reorganizing the Cosmology: The Reinterpretation of Deities and Religious Practice by Protestants in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 27(2) (1996): 350–373; Lorraine Aragon, *Fields of the Lord: Animism, Christian Minorities, and State Development in Indonesia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000); Janet Hoskins, "Entering the Bitter House: Spirit Worship and Conversion in West Sumba", in *Indonesian Religions in Transition*, ed. Rita Kipp Smith and Susan Rodgers (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987); Webb Keane, "Missionaries, Materialism, and Modern Subjects in Colonial Indonesia", in *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*, ed. Peter van der Veer (New York: Routledge, 1996); Webb Keane, "From Fetishism to Sincerity: On Agency, the Speaking Subject, and Their Historicity in the Context of Religious Conversion." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39 (1997): 674–693; Webb Keane, "Calvin in the Tropics: Objects and Subjects at the Religious Frontier", in *Border Fetishisms: Material Objects in Unstable Spaces*, ed. Patricia Spyer (New York: Routledge, 1998); Webb Keane, "Sincerity, 'Modernity', and the Protestants." *Cultural Anthropology* 17(1) (2002): 65–72; Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under early Spanish Rule* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994). For Africa, see the following: Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Patrick Harries, "The Roots of Ethnicity: Discourse and the Politics of Language Construction in South-east Africa." *African Affairs* 87(346) (1988): 25–52; Terence Ranger, "Missionaries, Migrants, and the Manyika: The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe", in *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, ed. Leroy Vail (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Terence Ranger, "The Local and the Global in Southern African Religious History", in *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, ed. Robert Hefner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
 4. Mary Steedly, "Importance of Proper Names: Language and 'National' Identity in Colonial Karoland." *American Ethnologist* 23(3) (1996): 447–475.
 5. Susan Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000): 57.
 6. Jennifer Connolly, *Becoming Christian and Dayak: A Study of Christian Conversion among Dayaks in East Kalimantan, Indonesia* (PhD diss., New School for Social Research, 2004).
 7. Mary Steedly, "Importance of Proper Names: Language and 'National' Identity in Colonial Karoland." *American Ethnologist* 23(3) (1996): 447–475.
 8. Ibid. Lorraine Aragon, "Reorganizing the Cosmology: The Reinterpretation of Deities and Religious Practice by Protestants in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 27(2): 350–373.

9. Oscar Salemink, "Christian Conversions in Southeast Asian Uplands: A Comparative Perspective" (paper presented at the Casting Faiths conference, National University of Singapore, June 2005). Also see Robert Hefner, "Multiple Modernities: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in a Globalizing Age." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27 (1998): 83–104; Robert Reed, "The Inglesia ni Cristo, 1914–2000: From Obscure Philippine Faith to Global Belief System." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde* 157(3) (2001): 561–608; Susan E. Ackerman and Raymond L. M. Lee, *Heaven in Transition: Non-Muslim Religious Innovation and Ethnic Identity in Malaysia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988).
10. Robert Hefner, "Of Faith and Commitment: Christian Conversion in Muslim Java", in *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, ed. Robert Hefner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 120.
11. Jerome Rousseau, *Central Borneo: Identity and Social Life in a Stratified Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). Tim Babcock, "Indigenous Ethnicity in Sarawak." *Sarawak Museum Journal* 22(46) (1974): 191–202.
12. The term "daya" or "Dayak" is thought to be derived from a Dayak language possibly meaning "upriver" or "interior" person. While in use before the arrival of the Dutch, it became more popular after the nineteenth century under their influence. Victor King, *The Peoples of Borneo* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1993).
13. Victor King, *The Peoples of Borneo* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1993).
14. Nancy Peluso, *Markets and Merchants: The Forest Products Trade of East Kalimantan in Historical Perspective* (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1983). James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768–1898* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1981).
15. Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades of the Straits: Smuggling and State-formation along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1870–1910* (PhD diss., Yale University, 2000).
16. Rita Kipp Smith and Susan Rodgers, eds, *Indonesian Religions in Transition* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987).
17. Ian Black, "The Lastposten: East Kalimantan and the Dutch in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries." *The Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 16 (1985): 281–291.
18. J. Thomas Lindblad, *Between Dayak and Dutch: The Economic History of Southeast Kalimantan 1880–1942* (Providence: Fortis Publications, 1989).
19. It should be noted that this is changing as other denominations, especially the Pentecostals, move in, enlarging the religious marketplace.
20. For example, the number of Balinese baptized during the same time period numbered only 436. The Dutch Missionary Society, working among the Batak on the neighboring island of Sumatra, reported only 525 conversions during their first 20 years of evangelization from 1890 to 1910. In 1940, their peak year during the prewar period, they only managed to baptize 500 converts.
21. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Rita Kipp Smith, *The Early Years of a Dutch Colonial Mission: The Karo Field* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990). Nicholas Tapp, "The Impact of Missionary Christianity upon Marginalized Ethnic Minorities: The Case of the Hmong." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 20(1) (1989): 70–95. Mary Steedly, "Importance of Proper Names: Language and

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22. J. Thomas Kindblad, *Between Dayak and Dutch: The Economic History of Southeast Kalimantan 1880–1942* (Providence: Fortis Publications, 1989).
 23. Mary Steedly, "Importance of Proper Names: Language and 'National' Identity in Colonial Karoland." *American Ethnologist* 23(3) (1996): 447–475.
 24. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, "Christianity and Colonialism in South Africa." *American Ethnologist* 13(1) (1986): 1–22.
 25. Mary Steedly, "Importance of Proper Names: Language and 'National' Identity in Colonial Karoland." *American Ethnologist* 23(3) (1996): 447–475.
 26. By this time the Christian Missionary Alliance, which was founded by A. B. Simpson in the United States in 1881 as a nondenominational church, had already opened mission fields in over 40 countries.
 27. Phillip Jenkins, "The Next Christianity", *Atlantic Monthly*, October 2001: 54.
 28. Mary Steedly, "Importance of Proper Names: Language and 'National' Identity in Colonial Karoland." *American Ethnologist* 23(3) (1996): 447–475. Rita Smith Kipp, *Disassociated Identities: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in an Indonesian Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003). Lorraine Aragon, "Reorganizing the Cosmology: The Reinterpretation of Deities and Religious Practice by Protestants in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 27(2) (1996): 350–373.
 29. Mary Steedly, "Importance of Proper Names: Language and 'National' Identity in Colonial Karoland." *American Ethnologist* 23(3) (1996): 449.
 30. It is estimated that Indonesia is home to over three hundred languages and dialects.
 31. Robert Hefner, "Islamization and Democratization in Indonesia", in *Islam in an Era of Nation-States*, ed. Robert Hefner and Patricia Horvath (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997). Rita Smith Kipp, *Disassociated Identities: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in an Indonesian Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003). William Liddle, *Politics and Culture in Indonesia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988).
 32. Anne Schiller, "Regional Son, Community of Tradition, or 'Dayak': What's in a Name in Indonesian Borneo?" Unpublished manuscript.
 33. David Clench, "The Gospel in Borneo", *Alliance Weekly*, February 9, 1935.
 34. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). Susan Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Jennifer Connolly, *Becoming Christian and Dayak: A Study of Christian Conversion among Dayaks in East Kalimantan, Indonesia* (PhD diss., New School for Social Research, 2004). Joel Robbins, *Becoming Sinners: Christianity + Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
 35. Oscar Salemin, "Christian Conversion in Southeast Asian Uplands: A Comparative Exploration" (paper presented at the Casting Faiths conference, National University of Singapore, June 2005). See Donald Sutton and Kang Xiaofei, this volume.

9

Recasting Religion and Ethnicity: Tourism and Socialism in Northern Sichuan, 1992–2005

Donald S. Sutton and Xiaofei Kang

In China, as in the cases examined elsewhere in this book, imperialism has shaped the idea of “religion”—though imperialism will require redefinition—and there were marked continuities in how religious faith was cast in postcolonial times.¹ Like other contributors, we hypothesize that along with officials, locals have also been agents in deciding how “religion” was understood and practised. Using documentary and ethnographic evidence, our case study looks both at contemporary policy in the People’s Republic and at its origins in late imperial and Republican China, and evaluates how religious policy has been manipulated and evaded on the ground. Recognizing that ethno-religion is a key manifestation of religion in China, we focus on a multiethnic site on the inner western periphery; and in view of the recent cultural and economic impact of tourism on religion, we select for examination a place that has become a tourist Mecca for east coast urban Chinese and since 1992 a World Heritage site.

Our findings reveal more complexity than we had expected both in policy and in local responses to it. Policy assumptions show clear continuities not just with the “imperial” past but with subsequent phases in Chinese modern history—the Republican period (1912–1949), and the period of radical Maoist policies (mid-1950s–mid-1970s). And local ethnic groups receive quite variable treatment at the hands of the state and respond rather differently in their religious behavior. Our chapter deals in turn with policy origins, actual policies, local attitudes toward religious belief, religious policy and tourism, with emphasis on the last half of the 30-year post-Mao reform period (1978–2006).

We begin with some clarifications about imperialism and ethno-religion, in the China context. As elsewhere the concept of religion came along with Western influence, but China was never a colony, rather what has been called a semi-colony, subject to the obligations forced on it by a treaty system serving the Western powers and Japan. Moreover, unlike such Western colonies as French Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies, China was *itself* an empire up to 1912, and the metropolitan center at Beijing imposed a sort of colonial relationship on its peripheral peoples, in the sense of involuntary submission to imperial

administration, economic subordination to Han merchants and settlers, and a long-term hegemonic relationship under Chinese culture.² Though China is no longer a semi-colony, and is an empire only in the senses that the old Qing frontiers are more or less intact and its peoples firmly tied to China proper, its dual “colonial” history is relevant to our topic. In the ethnically mixed regions in the far west and southwest, religious faith and practice are still “cast” in the shadow of this double postcolonialism.

“Ethno-religion” is an appropriate term in these regions, where most of China’s officially classified 55 minority nationalities live, because local identities have been tied almost indissolubly into religious practice.³ Here religion is a term applied to pre-existing “ethnic” practices and beliefs, not a new force from the outside, as it was in Jennifer Connolly’s case of Christian mission conversion among the Dayaks of Borneo (see Chapter 8). Among China’s Tibetans and Muslims, ethnic religion has been crucially important in daily life and in mediating relations with the state and with Han Chinese locals.⁴ Religion and ethnicity have been categorized and controlled in the same terms, a process that has helped to define and also mediate difference among nationalities, and in the successive periods of political change since the 1950s, the two have been suppressed and revived in tandem. “Religion” on China’s ethnic frontier appears to be almost an intrinsic aspect of ethnicity. Since there are also Han (mostly elderly) within the mixed population who practise Buddhism, there is an element of quasi-ethnic identification in their faith too.

What we term ethno-religion must be seen in the context of central/peripheral cultural relations over a very long history. The belt of non-Han micro-societies ringing China proper have been a source of endless fascination to the metropolitan Han imagination.⁵ Captivated by their customs, Han Chinese visitors from eastern China and stay-at-home consumers of information about the ethnic periphery have for centuries defined their own Han-ness (and Chineseness) with reference to the non-Han of the ethnic frontier, who preserve more of their past than the cities of the east and south, and these Han Chinese have taken a sentimental interest in religious practices as part and parcel of ethnic customs. The center’s sense of a duty to civilize the minorities promotes cultural initiatives that obviously impact religion. In policy too, neither ethnicity nor religion can be examined without looking at “the other” or at cultural relations in general, which includes tourism.

Our site is Huanglong (in Tibetan, Se’ercuo, in English, the Yellow Dragon) a multiethnic center of pilgrimage at the junction of Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, and Tibet, in Songpan county, which is part of the Autonomous Tibetan and Qiang Nationalities District of Aba (*Aba Zangzu Qiangzu zizhizhou*). Two of the local ethnic groups, Tibetan and Han Chinese, have had a long-standing attachment to this site of worship, partly defining themselves and their relations at an annual festival on the 15th of the sixth lunar month, and even Muslims, though not believers, have long been present as visitors and traders.⁶ This beautiful natural site, with its forested mountains, yellow-stone rock and myriad blue pools,

was admitted to the UNESCO World Heritage registry in 1992. It has attracted Chinese tourists in the millions, who along with tourism officials have developed their own rhetoric of appropriation. This is, in short, a place of multiple meanings and dynamic interrelationships, one where representations of religious faith and practice continue to be at the center of local ethno-political relationships. We shall find layered influences (Confucian, postcolonial, Marxist) underlying official religious policy, discrepancies in the treatment of different ethno-religious groups, and active efforts by the latter to adapt to and evade official policy. We must begin by framing current religious policy in historical terms.

The legacy of “religion” and twentieth-century Chinese nationalism

Since 1999, the United States has designated China as a “Country of Particular Concern” under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) for its “particularly severe violations of religious freedom,” and the State Department’s annual report to Congress has singled out antireligious policies in Tibetan and Uyghur (Muslim in Xinjiang) areas. Such sentiments reflect the gulf between two systems of government but tell more about U.S. ideology than Chinese. They leave obscure the cultural roots of current ethno-religious policy, omit any connection to Chinese nationalism and forget the continuities with the pre-socialist early Republic. They neglect the even more surprising history of how certain Western-derived notions of “religion” have conditioned religious policy in China. They also paint a simplifying brush over a diverse picture, for not all “ethno-religions,” as we shall show, have the same status, and regional differences are significant. Party policy driven by ideology at the center can be cautious and indirect on the ground, and local people have means of religious assertion that the state confronts with difficulty.

Although the term *zongjiao* had occasionally been used in China in reference to Buddhism, in its generalized modern sense of religion it derives from Japan at the start of the twentieth century.⁷ “Religion” already carried centuries of European baggage. Its widespread use in China’s Republican period (1912–1949 after entering via the Japanese kanji term *shūkyō* (Ch. *zongjiao*), had the powerful effect of objectifying all phenomena recognized as “religious.”⁸ Though the Chinese language had lacked a general word for religion, from at least the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) writers who stood outside the main neo-Confucian tradition had sometimes lumped together Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism under the term “three teachings” (*san jiao*). This categorization implicitly elevated the three to respectable coexistence. In the People’s Republic (1949–) it has been customary to speak of three world religions: Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, and within China, to recognize several official religions; these are currently Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. Popular cults fall outside this respectful categorization, though in the case of the

minority nationalities worship of the sacred has since the 1980s been tolerated as a “traditional custom.”

The term *zongjiao* gives every appearance of being neutral and equalizing, but its general adoption actually hemmed in religious activity as something to be labeled and externally controlled. In fact, it defined religion in no fewer than four important ways. First, *zongjiao* was understood as separate from the secular (and subordinate to it). Just as the Chinese language had not had a term for religion, neither did it have any equivalent term for “secular” (*shisu*), since all classes and teachings assumed the mutual interpenetration of the workings of Heaven and the works of humanity. Discarding this conventional understanding, the iconoclastic leaders of the early twentieth century New Culture Movement took the theoretical opposition between religion and science (*kexue*, another new term) not as complementary but as antagonistic. Writers as varied as Hu Shi, Cai Yuanpei, Chen Duxiu, and Wu Zhihui saw religion in all its forms as anathema and allocated no separate theoretical space for religion. Despite some defense of the role of religion by other intellectuals—Dai Jitao, Tang Junyi, Feng Youlan—in the 1930s and 1940s, there was no recapitulation of the lengthy Western debate on the relation of religion and science.⁹ While there were efforts along the lines of the European Enlightenment project of devising a rational religion, notably in the New Life Movement and within Buddhism, most intellectuals saw religion as contradicting science.¹⁰ Nor did anything come of the early Republican government’s attempt to create a state religion on the basis of Confucianism.¹¹ The spread of Marxism in its Chinese forms of course fortified the secular and scientific bias of twentieth-century thinking among Chinese elites. At the present day, “scientific thinking” is shorthand for atheism, and the science to be applied to analyze religion is Marxism. Secularization has taken the form of institutional separation of the five recognized religions from everyday life, in a way that keeps them under direct political supervision.¹²

A second definitional trend was to pair *zongjiao* with superstition, *mixin*, a disparaging concept that entered China at the same time. Behind the quick adoption of the two terms lay imperial-era notions of certain teachings or rites as heterodox (*xie*) or improper (*yin*). These had been the object of state retaliation, in the form of sporadic image-destroying and temple-demolishing campaigns by local officials in most dynastic periods, perhaps especially in late imperial China. Even more than it had been in Reformation-era criticism of the Catholic Church, the charge of superstition was difficult for religious organizations of early twentieth-century China to evade.¹³ The relatively weak institutions of religion-blurred distinctions with superstition and made it hard for religious organizations to avert modernist attacks.¹⁴ Under successive regimes, religion shaded into superstition and only the government decided where to draw the line. Taking verbal aim at “superstitions,” the new national government in 1928 resumed the policy of expropriating religious properties begun in the late Qing reform decade though without great success.¹⁵ The People’s Republic after 1949 closed down all forms of religion until the collapse of Maoism in the late 1970.

Third, despite some intellectuals' favoring of Christianity as a modern form of religion, *zongjiao* was by the 1930s more often seen as archaic and a sign of backwardness. Evolutionary ideas about society, which Yan Fu's translation of Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* had introduced in China, ranked the religious impulse as a "primitive" stage of human development, and superstition as still more primitive.¹⁶ Placing religion under the shadow of superstition, such ideas were not inconsistent with Marxism, another branch of evolutionary thinking. Evolutionism, as we shall see, is also the lens through which the minority nationalities are viewed.

Fourth, reformers rejected communal practices and prioritized religious *belief*, in the Western fashion, taking it to be properly private in nature; religious practice was not construed as a right.¹⁷ Even the leading émigré scholar Wing-tsit Chan, discussing the prospects for religion, confined himself to possible beliefs of a religiously minded modern Chinese intellectual.¹⁸ *Zongjiao* (i.e., a true religion, as opposed to superstition) was a matter of personal faith, institutionally validated in canonical texts. Theoretical Marxist writers in the present favor the expression "freedom of religious belief," which omits mention of the public and performative ritual celebrations of the folk.¹⁹

Drawn from both European and Chinese traditional sources, these associations of *zongjiao* all implied a negative object to be removed or at best held in check. The absence of any agreed criteria gave tremendous powers of control to political authorities.²⁰

Thus by contrast with the West, where Christianity played a central role in the early formation of many nationalities, in China, religion has been nationalism's obverse—a magnet for patriotic hostility.²¹ Nationalism (with a small "n") guided conceptions of *zongjiao* partly because of the inextricable connection of Christianity with imperialism. The disasters of the anti-Christian Boxer Movement of 1898–1900, which weakened the state with a crushing indemnity imposed after the eight-power intervention, discredited Christian missions along with reflexive antforeignism. Protected by the shameful unequal treaties, the foreign churches continued to be China's most powerful religious organizations until the Japanese invasion (1931–1945). Chinese intellectuals beginning with the May Fourth Movement lumped Christianity with superstition as a prime cause of China's disunity and weakness. Some, it is true, emphasized the modernity of Christianity: the Nanjing government did not persecute what it recognized as religions, foreign or domestic, and Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek] converted to Christianity to please his wife Song Meiling. Most Chinese patriots, however, were consumed by the growing crisis with Japan; if they thought of the future state they were disinclined to set limits on its power, let alone envisage special rights for organized religion. It is no wonder that in the People's Republic "patriotic" is frequently repeated as a prime requirement in religious organization or that policy theorists still believe that foreign influence underlies all acute religious problems.²²

Where ethno-religion was concerned, traditional Han culturalist presumptions of the superiority and attraction of Chinese ways joined evolutionary notions

of science and modernity to impose on nationalistic governments the duty of paternalistic reform of minority ways. Primitive religion, as L. H. Morgan's stage theory of human history had taught Engels and through him Chinese Marxists, was an aspect of a minority group's backwardness.²³ As the Han majority led the modernization of the nation, the government could help the minorities advance by helping such "superstitions" to wither away.

Not to be forgotten is the sacred component of nationalism and ethnicity itself, often noted in other contexts.²⁴ While Republican governments did not generally claim to have divine support, the nationalism to which the ruling Nationalist Party claimed sole title as its source of virtue validated its actions to protect the people in all realms. Many writers have noted a patently "religious" spirit in the cult of Mao: adulation for a human symbol of virtue, trust in an all-powerful magical savior, faith in a perfect future, moral rigor and a sense of righteousness. In the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) objects touched and written by the great leader, or representing his image, acquired a sacred quality. Some rituals were also religious, most obviously the morning and evening worship of Mao, but also ritualized mass meetings expressing collective fervor and demonizing enemies, and self-sacrificial feats of endurance.²⁵ Religious themes persist in the largely depoliticized posthumous cult of Mao.²⁶

The sacredness of nationalism had significant implications for the place of religion. Whereas institutionalized religion posed no serious political challenge in the twentieth century (except in outlying Tibet and perhaps Xinjiang), the very idea and practice of religion seemed to challenge the authoritative and ultimate claims of the parties aspiring to singular national authority. Rebecca Nedostup suggests that the Nationalist government became essentially a religion through its insistence on monopolizing the definition of the truth.²⁷ In other words, one-party nationalism occupied some of the same spaces, psychological and behavioral, as religion. The banning of all religion from the schools at the height of the nationalist movement in 1926 and the 1928 attack on "superstition" reflect not any real threat but this sort of symbolic competition.²⁸ Perhaps the refusal of the quasi-religious organization of the party to tolerate rivals explains the anathema with which most political elites have regarded religion, and their determination, up to the present, despite lip service to freedom of religious belief, to keep religious practices strictly under control.

Post-Mao ethno-religious policies in China

After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the modernization policy of Deng Xiaoping beginning in 1978, religion gradually and unevenly revived in the People's Republic of China. As many recent studies have shown, revival has been vigorous, spontaneous and outside official control.²⁹ Toleration has continued to be enunciated and practised, however, unless political risks are feared, in large part because commitment to Marxian materialism has bowed to domestic and foreign realities: i.e., to popular demand rebounding from repression in the Cultural Revolution, especially in "ethnic" regions; and to broader notions of

human rights (including freedom of religion) as China participates in UNESCO, WTO, and other international organizations.

There are undoubted continuities from the Republican period into the reform era. The idea of the nation as an unchallengeable goal to which all else must be sacrificed persists, along with the call to identify with a single party whose leaders are uniquely qualified to advance the national cause. As in the Maoist period, socialism is formally the supreme good, though commerce and development currently receive a lot more attention. Religious policies continue to acknowledge that religion is a category that it is outmoded and irrational and its institutions permeated with class inequality, and policy makers, perhaps mindful of Maoist collective effervescence in the 1960s, continue to worry about spontaneous religious expressions. Yet China's membership of international organizations and contacts with trading partners require accepting freedom of religious belief. Thus, while in the revolutionary 1960s and 1970s, Maoism did not even leave a private space for individual worship and belief, religious expression under proper constraints is deemed acceptable under a policy formalized in 1982 in a new Constitution and spelled out in "Document 19."³⁰ In the borderlands, where minority nationalities are usually a majority, a degree of toleration is inevitable.

Freedom of religious belief has been reaffirmed, but there are limits: party members are supposed to uphold the incompatibility of religion with Marxism. "Document 19", however, counseled patience in regions where religion and ethnicity are intertwined.³¹ Freedom of worship has been permitted but "superstitious" activities, such as shamanism and geomancy, are outlawed. Freedom of organization is granted for the five recognized religions, but they must support the nation and socialism and, as in the case of the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Church, remain free from foreign control. Jiang Zemin took steps to strengthen party policy on religion and the adaptation of religion and socialism. The qigong exercise movement Falungong with its end-of-time beliefs was suppressed in 1999–2001 as a sectarian group that disturbed public order and confronted Party authority.³² The party-state continues to assert, as it did in the Maoist period, the right to determine how one may worship, and which mosques, monasteries and temples are rebuilt, protected, exploited and opened to Chinese visitors and to foreigners. Religious personnel informed us of yearly retraining sessions in Chengdu, and probably these are also run in capitals of other ethnically diverse regions.

Tolerance at the ethno-religious border is justified by ethnic and religious sensitivities alike. Ye Xiaowen, the long-time Director of Religious Affairs on the State Council wrote in 1996 of the dangers of "going to the extreme or becoming too impatient" in handling the religious question. Paying special attention to the national minorities, he noted that "the religious question is often closely linked with the national question," naming 12 minorities with Buddhist following and ten Islamic. "In a nation[ality] (*minzu*) with a broad-based and profound religious belief, the religious and national sentiments, the religious and national psychology, and religious and national customs, religious and national culture,

the religious and national consciousness of every believer are intertwined and infiltrate each other, sometimes even becoming inseparable.” Party members in such regions must go along with the local customs without becoming believers, yet they should not see religion and nationality as one. They should work to gradually “change those customs and habits that are harmful to the production, life and physical and mental health of the masses, as well as those canon laws, corrupt customs, and religious institutions that hinder the development and progress of that nation[ality].”³³ Ye’s formulation of short-term tolerance and long-term cultural transformation balances conflicting priorities: ensuring nominal religious freedom, and at the same time civilizing the ethno-religious minorities.

Regulations issued in 2005 to cover the “autonomous” areas reflect similar ambivalence, especially at the level of religious practice. One section instructed such areas to “guarantee the rights and freedom of all ethnic minorities to retain their traditional folkways and customs” including “showing special consideration for their festivals . . . and respecting their marriage and funeral customs.” At the same time, however, “ethnic minorities are encouraged to adopt new, scientific, civilized and healthy customs in daily life, as well as in marriages and funerals.”³⁴

The legacy of evolutionism we have stressed above is clear in such statements. Toleration for religion is extended to the minorities because they are not yet civilized, and yet their civilizing is only a matter of time. But this attempt to reconcile the rival priorities of religious freedom and civilizing the minorities has been limited by mounting anxieties about Uyghur and Tibetan separatism with apparent foreign encouragement. The Tibetans present something of a practical problem because of foreign support for the Dalai Lama, because Tibetans in China look to the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) as an ultimate source of religious or at least cultural authority, and because of the past social power of the monasteries and lamas. The late nineties saw a tightening of ethnic policies and in recent years, education policies have shifted to emphasize Chinese language in minority schools at the expense of local languages.³⁵ In 2003, the national leadership chose as president Hu Jintao, who had earned a reputation as a hardliner during his stint in the TAR in the 1989 crackdown. Religious control is unlikely to be loosened.

Old Huanglong as a sacred site: Tibetan and Chinese perspectives

While official policy toward religion was conditioned by these preconceived theories and assumptions, its effects depended on what those practicing religion themselves understand by their faiths. In our frontier site, selected for its ethnic and religious diversity, there was no unified conception: instead, two religious imaginaries, each with many variations, underlay the annual festival, which local groups celebrated on the same day, the 15th of the sixth lunar month. The various religious buildings and caves alongside travertine pools and waterfalls were

familiar to all visitors, but their use and interpretation differed for Tibetans and Han Chinese.

The Han Chinese were interested in the deities of the various shrines and temples, and in the Buddhist Middle Temple and especially in the Rear Temple of the god Huanglong, built over a huge cave next to the highest pool called the Multicolored Lake (*Wucai chi*). Tibetans walked or rode past the same sites but their main focus was the eternally snow-capped mountain Shar Dung ri (*Xiadongri*, Eastern Conch Mountain) overlooking the lake. The difference of focus reflected the importance of venerated mountains, which in Tibetan tradition are deified and oversee surrounding landmarks.³⁶ Tibetans regarded the Multicolored Lakes, called the Golden Lakes, as female dancers who entertained Shar Dung ri or, along with the great cave, as officials in his service (see Figure 9.1).

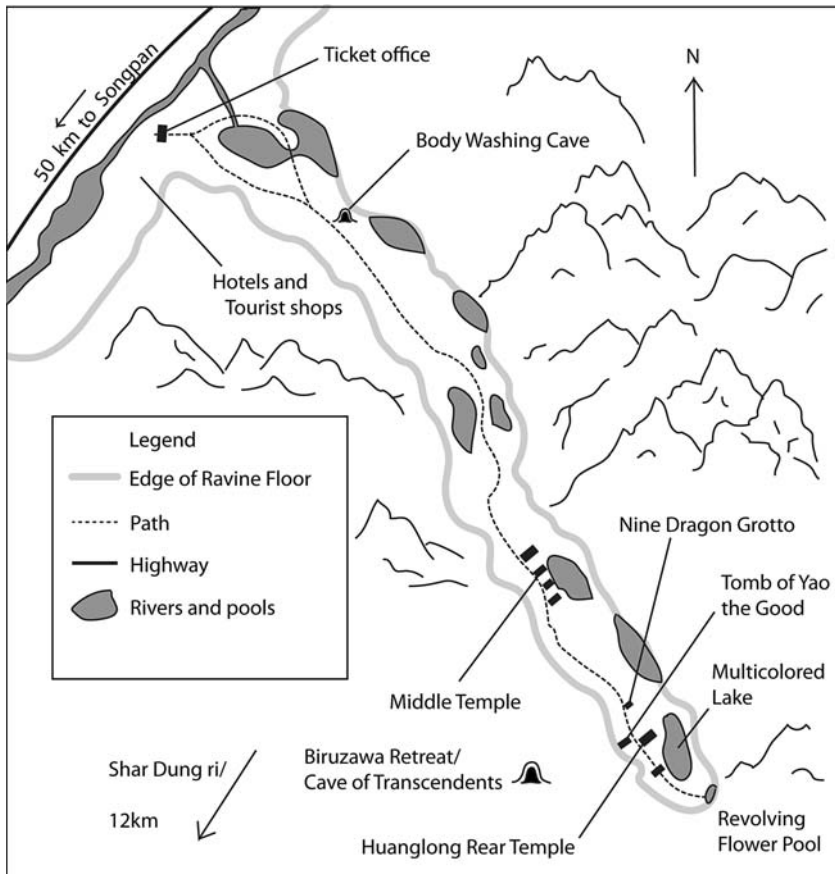


Figure 9.1 Map of Huanglong Gorge.

The Tibetan understanding is that mountains and other elements of the sacred landscape were produced by famous humans of the past, who were in turn sanctified in a relationship of mutual signification.³⁷ Tönpa Shenrap (*Ch. Dongbaxinrao*), the founder of the Bönpo sect and identical to the Buddha, created this and other sacred mountains.³⁸ In the twelfth century, the lama Skyang 'phags is said to have opened three roads around the mountain, uncovered magic implements in a stone, found an image of Tönpa Shenrap in the lake, and purified the waters so that birds, local gods and demons came to worship him. At the age of 32, after years of self-cultivation (*xiushen*), he sanctified and perfected Shar Dung ri in the tiger month (6/15) in 1158.³⁹ At the same time he succeeded in his personal search for transcendence or nirvana, leaving traces of his acts in particular rocks, caves, and springs that only the most enlightened seekers will recognize.⁴⁰ This and similar stories project onto the landscape a version of local history peopled by powerful Tibetan gods, mountains, and lamas—three mutually reinforcing presences that are not sharply different in nature. For pilgrims, the prior sanctification lends the power to facilitate personal healing and extend life. Within Tibetan local society, the myths' emphasis on the privileged powers of lamas affirms the hierarchy of the Tibetan priesthood.⁴¹ Nevertheless, in the Tibetan version, godhead does not need to be vested in (or sanctified by) temples or monasteries on these mountains. Sanctity is immanent and accessible in nature, not through human building. Feeling quite at home in the mountains, Tibetans focus on the production of individual sanctity remote from society. Their distinctive rituals, for example, scattering *rlungrta*, colored paper squares, at high places, and stringing cotton scripture sheets in trees and thickets, do not usually concentrate near buildings or places of worship. They also have the tradition of circumambulating sacred mountains, and of overnight cave sojourning. Even today, lamas and others well informed of Tibetan tradition refrain from visiting the "Han Huanglong temple," as some call it, but simply visit the Grotto, the Lake and the Spring behind it.

For Han Chinese, by contrast, the whole travertine slope and the forested mountains around it are subordinated to the Rear Temple dedicated to Huanglong. By "Huanglong" is understood a doubled figure: Huanglong the Perfected Man (*Huanglong zhenren*) who reached transcendence in the Grotto, and the Yellow Dragon who nourished and controlled the streams. Thus Huanglong the dragon is the focus of a fertility cult, assisted by Yu the Great (*Da Yu*), the Chinese water-controlling culture hero recognized in a smaller shrine above the Rear Temple, just beside the Multicolored Lake. Rather than being distributed about a mountain site in Tibetan fashion, Chinese divinity focuses more narrowly on the carved image of Huanglong, on the man-made temple where it is installed, as well as on the natural cave below where Huanglong is said to have cultivated himself. Local Chinese care not for other sacred mountains but only for their own downstream communities whose agricultural prosperity depends on the Yellow Dragon's rain-bringing efforts. The myths they tell harness nature

for civilization, dwelling on the social nature of Huanglong and his appeal to Chinese communities near and far.

Parallel names appropriated the site for its respective users. Along with Shar Dung ri, the Eastern Conch Mountain, almost every site in Huanglong and its surroundings has a Tibetan name, which is never exactly like the Chinese equivalent. What Han Chinese call the Revolving Flower Pool (*zhuanhua chi*) above the Rear Temple Tibetans just call the Spring (*yuanshui* in Chinese), because it is the source of the lake below. The Huanglong cave, according to one Tibetan abbot, say informed Tibetans, is actually the Nine Dragon Grotto, and its three Buddha stalagmites are as the Buddhas of the Three Ages (*Sanshifo*) representing the past, present, and future. Both Tibetan and Chinese names can refer to fragmentary or imagined narratives. Of the Tibetan sites, the more significant places are associated with the god Tönpa Shenrap or the lama Skyang 'phags, or other famous Bönpo lamas. For example, the Min River, which finds its source in a holy mountain, is said to flow as a result of the actions of lama Zenwangteqing (Chinese rendering) who lived 4000 years ago. The Cave of Transcendents (*Shenzian dong*) high on the mountain, with its spring of sweet water—still visited by some of the more adventurous Qiang and Han pilgrims and occupied by Tibetans for overnight meditation—is associated with Biruzala who cultivated the Way there in the Tubo dynasty (seventh to ninth centuries). What the Han call the Body Washing Cave (*Xishen dong*) is “the Grotto where [another holy man] whose Tibetan name is rendered into Chinese as Dalanianba, cultivated the Way.” Clearly Tibetan myths have a longer history at the site. One Tibetan pointed out that the sights along the travertine slope didn't have Chinese names at all until the beginning of tourism in 1981 (see Figure 9.2).

The contrasting myths, rituals, and names might be described as forms of “contestation,” But two points should be emphasized. First, a degree of ritual overlap suggests long-mutual influence. Some Tibetans come into the temple and pray before the image of Huanglong, identifying him as Tönpa Shenrap or as “Buddha,” or else confess that they don't know who the image is. They appear to be simply copying the ritual practice of other worshippers without troubling with belief. Conversely, Han visitors are not immune from Tibetan influence, for example, one fragmentary oral myth states that the annual festival on 6/15 celebrates Huanglong's achievement of Buddhahood, certainly an unusual step for a divinity usually regarded as Daoist. Second, contestation is not the same as confrontation. If for the rest of the year Han, Tibetan and Qiang mostly kept at a sometimes antagonistic distance, at festival time the various groups, observing each other's rituals and oblivious to the divergent names and myths, could rub shoulders, and tolerate each other's presence, collecting containers of water for its special qualities and all regarding the place and time as marvelously propitious.

We should not forget the role of the Muslims, who everyone recalls were the large-scale providers of food to the thousands of festival participants. Though unbelievers in any version of Huanglong or Tönpa Shenrap, they too defined



Figure 9.2 Monks at Rear Temple (photograph by authors).

their festival roles at Huanglong in a way that was different from the everyday, when interethnic social intercourse was severely limited, because dietary restrictions made it impossible to visit Han Chinese: “We could not go to Muslim houses,” we were often told by Han informants, “because we would have no way to reciprocate. They would not eat our food.” Festival time was a special moment when rules of reciprocity and religious taboos could be skirted. Pure (*qingzhen*) food was purchased, and Muslims could be fully part of the community of festival-goers. Muslims are still seen at Huanglong, professing nostalgia for the old days.

Official remaking of Huanglong in the age of tourism

Along with relatively permissive policies since the early 1980s, religious activity has somewhat revived in Huanglong as elsewhere in China. We do not deal in detail with this religious revival, but in the final section below will examine the perspectives of local worshippers in connection with their reactions to tourism in the past 15 years. We deal first with tourism policy. It was during this gradual revival in the 1980s that Huanglong gradually became known as a tourist destination, and after its elevation to World Heritage status in 1992 an ever-growing flood of tourists came annually. The site came under

a new county-level authority, the Huanglong Management Bureau (*Huanglong guanliju*), which necessarily had to develop a religious policy toward this old pilgrimage site. Religious expression in the region has shared in China's limited revival of religion, but the arrival of environmental tourism at Huanglong led to new restrictions. The Ministry of Construction's application to UNESCO had promised to "take special measures to protect the Huanglong Temple in the Huanglong Valley [and to] enhance management especially during the annual fair at the temple, to prevent damage caused by the large number of tourists during the fair."⁴² Accordingly on environmental grounds—but fully in tune with the state's religious policy—the Management Bureau has strictly limited ritual observances and forbidden camping on the site. Somewhat in tension with environmental goals, authorities also have their eye on financial opportunities.

The Bureau's representations foster religious symbolism only in forms that appeal to tourists and do not damage the site's natural appeal. Its publications give very little attention to any ethnic group's religious activity, or to the contestation in myth and ritual just described. Some of them are essentially literary: "Sacred ground, land of fairies, Jasper pools of heaven in our human world," conveying to ecotourists the natural sublimity of Huanglong's physical environment.⁴³ But other publications propagate quasi-religious cultural representations, one of them entirely Han in the religio-nationalist spirit discussed earlier, registering the political dominance of Han Chinese in the Chinese state, and the other Tibetan, acknowledging the tourist appeal of Tibetan culture and Huanglong's location in Aba, a Tibetan-Qiang autonomous prefecture.⁴⁴

The nationalistic cultural representation draws upon a typically Chinese symbolic repertoire. Huanglong is promoted as the residence of the Yellow Dragon, using "dragon" in a broader sense to reincorporate this border landscape within the framework of the Chinese nation-state. The lavishly produced 1999 guide, identifying the dragon as "the symbol of the Chinese nation," includes a picture map of the Huanglong valley's topography, represented as a giant yellow flying dragon: the undulating ground is his backbone, colorful pools are his glittering scales. The guide recruits Daoism too as a national symbol, suggesting that the temple of the Yellow Dragon, amidst green mountains and colorful waters, reflects the essence of the Daoist philosophy: the unity of nature and man. Thus "the ancient temples of Huanglong are important relics to study the historical transformation of the Daoist culture and provide critical evidence of the Yu the Great's historical achievement of taming the [Min] River in the plateau of northwestern Sichuan." The entire region is said to be important for the Chinese nation: "The Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau is known to be the 'Roof of the World' and the origin of the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers. It has bred generations of descendents of Emperors Yan and Huang (*yanhuang zisun*) and it is therefore the root and soul of the Chinese nation."⁴⁵

The second, Tibetan-style official cultural representation is equally selective. Tibetans are important for local color: while the application to UNESCO was under the category of natural not cultural site, its text did note the "exotic scenes

of minority life . . . and the mysterious villages, temples, farming and herding, singing and dancing, of different nationalities” as part of the charm of Huanglong district. In recent years, the Bureau increasingly emphasizes cultural tourism.⁴⁶ The new guest-house has a Tibetan decorative theme, Tibetan material culture is on display in its ground-floor museum, and Tibetan folkloric products are on sale nearby.⁴⁷ The Tibetan name “Golden Lake” (phoneticized as Se’ercuo in Chinese) is often used for the whole Huanglong site, or for the roadside hotels and tourist shops outside the entrance, though there is no evidence that a Tibetan hamlet ever existed there. Consistent with the Tibetan emphasis, local staged performances held at or near Huanglong in our experience feature more Tibetan performing routines than any other group.⁴⁸

This means less in substance than it might appear. The local religious landscape is made to serve national goals, with Tibetan motifs clearly subordinated to them. According to literature prepared for tourists, the Yellow Dragon sits at the top as the symbol of the Chinese nation. As they ascend the hill, the tourists are made to experience Tibetan and Chinese culture in the right order. Admiring the gradual unfolding of the natural wonders along the mountain path, they may stop at the Service Center near the Middle Temple—significantly rebuilt as a *Tibetan* Bon temple—to enjoy Tibetan barley tea, savoring the exotic appeal of a frontier ethnic culture. The experience culminates at the highest point of their climb at the Multicolored Lake, the most spectacular wonder of all. There the Rear Temple, embraced by sacred caverns, colorful pools, and wild mountain ranges, exemplifies the ultimate unity of heaven and man (*tianren heyi*), a term which has been appropriated by the environmentalist movement. Beyond it stands the small shrine of Yu the Great, the founding symbol of both Hua (Chinese) and Qiang peoples. In such discourse, the natural and religious landscape of Huanglong is implicitly integrated with the political order and the all-encompassing Chinese nation, subordinating Tibetans and other minorities to the Chinese people as a whole, that is, to the Han majority.

Historical Tibetan connections are left out of account. The holy mountain Shar Dung ri is called only by the Chinese name Xuebaoding, in the “famous scenery” section of the guide, with no mention of Skyang ‘phags lama or Tönpa Shenrap.⁴⁹ The 1999 gazetteer compilers did not include Tibetan lore at all, though we were told it was made available to them.⁵⁰ The tourist guide already discussed does acknowledge the Tibetan view of the mountain’s sacredness, its inseparability from the Golden Lake, and so forth, but briefly and without elaboration, reframing the Tibetan myth within a reference to Guanyin, an overarching and not explicitly Tibetan figure.⁵¹

In effect, religion and culture are at the service of tourism and the commercial profit it brings, with untoward effects on religious practice. The two newly renovated temples were for several years contracted to outside Han entrepreneurs, who run the temples as businesses and split the revenue from incense-selling and tourist donations with the Management Bureau. In this commercialized atmosphere, the resident Daoist priest has become a mere religious decoration

of the Rear Temple, greeting the visitors in his Daoist robe and handing out incense sticks but having no right to manage temple finance or perform Daoist ritual services.⁵² Tibetan religion and culture has also been sidelined. While Tibetan culture has received attention in the interest of cultural tourism, what is presented is entirely superficial. Local officials have ignored the wishes of particular monasteries, rebuffing lamas and monks who wanted to reside at the Middle or Rear temples or perform Tibetan rituals at the site.

In 2002 and 2004, the Management Bureau held an “International Folk Festival” on an open-air stage outside the site entrance. This coincided with the ancient festival date, the middle of the sixth month and in official eyes substituted for the old festival. It suits official purposes by displaying ethnic identity without religion, removing what is spontaneous, emotional, and potentially out of control. Ethnic groups, dressed in their finery, portray themselves to each other, were divided into spectators and performers. However, instead of participating in the chaos of festivals and the solemnity of temple rites, they become objectified representatives of their group. Writing of colonial relationships in the Dutch East Indies, Ann Stoler has written of the obsessive administrative fear of uncontrolled or inappropriate sentiment. The new official festival, excluding religion and spontaneity, puts things safely under control.⁵³ Spectators are supposed to see their own ethnic group as the government wants to present it to tourists.

In short, the official effort in policy, discourse and practice is to mute and merge both ethnicity and religion, ideally making both visual and performative (and thus marketable) at the expense of genuine content. Ethnicities are presented to (Han and overseas Chinese) tourists as general markers of the unfamiliar and exotic. Monks make brief stage appearances along with smoke and colored lights, and the great horns sound—Bon religion sensationalized and unexplained. The billboards, videos, museums and staged festivals declare tourist sites to be an intrinsic part of China’s modernity—a means of expressing the new—unreligious—values of mass consumption and national pride. Here religion, as represented officially, is no more than the colorful external expression of ethnicity, subsumed within harmonious nationalism.

Religious revival, resistance and the response to tourism

Many pilgrims we have talked to miss the freedom of the old festival and are unimpressed by the brief official festival staged outside the entrance. The main reason given for controls is the protection of the environment. Although pilgrims from Songpan county do not have to pay entrance fees to the park, they do face strict limits on what they can do in the site. An army of security personnel and wardens imposes the restrictions noted earlier, and fences, closed-circuit monitoring and a single entrance prevent people from camping overnight, selling refreshments, or straying from the footpaths. The flow of tourists and pilgrims reverses the counterclockwise direction of traditional Tibetan circumambulation

in the Bönpo style. Besides some irritation at these restrictions, there is a certain antagonism toward the horde of tourists, who number over ten thousand a day in the summer months. Despite the modern-style self-flushing toilets, pilgrims know that tourist women do not observe the traditional menstruation taboo. Tourists in general are therefore blamed by local Chinese and Tibetans alike for polluting the site and compromising its sacred power.⁵⁴

The percentage of Han population that has taken up religious practice is not large, but there is an active group of elderly women who have attached themselves to Guanyin temples in Songpan region. In the reform period they have entered into a tacit competition with officialdom. One of them, Woman Li, resourceful though unlettered, spent many summers at Huanglong, and beginning in the late 1990s, led an effort to raise money from tourists to renovate the decrepit Middle Temple. In 1997 the Bureau began to pay attention to the two temples, partly because of its practical concern to generate more tourist income. In 2000, they hired the Daoist priest noted above to preside over the Rear Temple, and in the winter of 2003–2004, rebuilt the partially repaired Middle Temple (originally a Chinese Buddhist construction) in Tibetan Bon style. A Han Chinese businessman was allowed to run these temples and retain part of the income generated from the sale of incense.⁵⁵ The elderly Han women were angered by the Tibetanizing of their temple, and turned their attention to Yu the Great's shrine, then being used as a workmen's kitchen. Refurbished with volunteered help from Songpan carpenters, it is still their main base in the festival season.

The Daoist priest is himself an ally of the women. Since his arrival, the Management Bureau has blocked his efforts to promote Daoist rituals, delayed repairing leaks in the temple roof or hiring an assistant to help with cleaning up after the tourists and other chores, and restricted his duties to supplying incense sticks to the tourists. In 2005, though, despite the Management Bureau's opposition, he managed by application through the Songpan religious department to get the Rear Temple officially certified as a place of worship.

The elderly Songpan women's frustrations about a dying tradition, and about fears that old vows and rituals to protect health and family are losing effectiveness because of the invasion of tourism, are expressed in religious rituals and in the language of purity and pollution. When we watched these women perform a pacification ritual in front of the Middle Temple, they mentioned the tourists in their prayers seeking to quiet the lonely souls and wild ghosts and win these spirits' protection. The women expressed concerns both about the ban on outside sacrifices, which would leave such wandering souls unpacified, and the pollutions brought in daily by tourists. The women made the necessary offering to ghosts by burning spirit money on the ground, in violation of the official rule—though a certain amount of joshing with the park guards made the challenge only half-serious.⁵⁶

An example of successful popular revival and resistance at is the City God (*cheng huang*) temple on a high ledge overlooking Songpan, rebuilt in the last

five years despite the repeated objections of the officials. Along with local place gods (*tudi shen*), the City God is not an approved deity, and the official line is that its festivals do not represent “healthy” customs. In the 1990s two men of middle age, experts in painting and construction, led a number of women in raising money to rebuild the temple complex, which had been gradually demolished in the chaos of the Maoist period. When officials refused to give permission, they went ahead with the project anyway, building shrines for Buddhist gods in the complex, but eventually constructing a City God hall completed with the traditional fearsome guards and wall paintings depicting the sufferings of hell. Numerous official attempts to discourage the project were unsuccessful as a result, in part, of the intervention of senior Han officials’ wives, who themselves participate in the temple’s annual rituals.

A more tacit form of resistance is in recalling the painful and divisive events of the 1960s, which local officials here (as in the rest of China) would prefer to remain unremembered, and recasting them as stories of moral and divine vindication. Many recall the Daoist priest who had lived at the Rear Temple for 30 years as one of the victims of this unhappy time. Yao the Good (Yao Shanren) as he is still known today is said to have returned to the temple in 1962 and committed suicide at the time of the Socialist Education movement (1962–1965), a period which marked the intensification of the ideological campaign that would characterize the remainder of the Maoist years. According to a local story, the suicide was initiated by a man maliciously adding pork fat to Yao’s vegetarian noodles. However, divine justice was served. Within a few years this man suffered a violent and fatal illness, his wife remarried, but also died, and before long, the entire family was wiped out. People talk about another event at Huanglong: in 1967 or 1968 (perhaps the highpoint of the domestic chaos) two militiamen approached the Rear Temple and assaulted the statue of Huanglong himself, ripping off the image’s gown and hacking at its neck. These men also came to a bad end. Both died in agony from unexplained causes, one with a mysterious sympathetic weal on his neck, and their family members one after another died, as well. People do not explicitly claim these acts were retribution, rather letting the reported events speak for themselves, but do retell them with considerable satisfaction. The sympathy with Yao is palpable. Even after his tomb above the meadow at the Rear Temple was temporarily fenced off in 2005, pilgrims and Songpan people continued to burn incense for him until escorted away by guards.⁵⁷

Whereas the elderly Songpan worshippers are a small minority among Han, a larger proportion of the Muslim Hui attend religious services—of these, more men than women—especially after the age of 40. Forbidden during the Cultural Revolution from wearing the Muslim cap (*kufi*), on the day Mao Zedong’s death was announced in 1976, as if by prior agreement, Hui men in Songpan at once started wearing them again. Before long, a group of old Hui had begun quietly demonstrating day and night, seated outside the government offices for the reopening of a mosque within the city. Muslim identity is reinforced by dietary

practices that make hosting with Han difficult or impossible, by distinct burial practices in community (not ancestral) graves, and by internal requirements favoring conversion to Islam in the case of cross-ethnic intermarriage. Knowledge of Islam and memorization of the Koran is becoming more common. Young Hui men who go off to study in other regions, such as the largely Muslim northwest, meet Muslims from all over China and come back with a new sense of both Hui identity and Islam. Muslim identity seems to be reinforced with age, most middle-aged male Muslims going to Friday prayers and many doing the five times a day prayer. In contrast, very few women wear even a partial *hejab* head-covering. Despite an educational system that continues to be determinedly secular and antireligious, it is not clear that the younger generation of Hui will be less Islamic than their parents. Food supply, taxi services, and hired Imam (Ch. *ahong*) and ritual butchers all keep the city Hui dwellers and rural Hui communities in touch with each other. In addition, the sense of neglect from the government (the Aba Region includes recognition of Tibetans and Qiang but not Hui in its title, and they say they have gained little from tourism), fortifies their sense of mutual reliance.⁵⁸

As the largest ethnic group in the autonomous region of Aba, the Tibetans have been able to benefit in many ways. Although key decisions are made in Songpan by the Party secretary, a Han Chinese position, Tibetans' participation as cadres in government is strong. Tibetans have moved in small numbers to the city from which they were always excluded. Many have made money from tourism—none more than the community at Chuanzhusi, a crucial road juncture in which almost every Tibetan family has entered retail selling to tourists, and which is now the prefecture's richest town in per capita terms. Tibetans receive the kind of symbolic deference denied to the smaller number of local Muslims, and have a huge statue just outside the city in honor of the Tibetan ruler, Songzen ganbu (Tib. *Sron btsan sgampo*), with his happy looking Han Chinese princess Wencheng. Quite a number of local monasteries have been permitted to reopen, one as a training center for priests and lamas, while several more function partly as tourist sights. Many monasteries receive voluntary support from local villages as in the past, but on a voluntary basis, and the growing prosperity from tourism has given a boost to Tibetan-style building, all sorts of ritual furnishings and lama employment for commemorative readings and house dedications, and the like. However, there is no widespread resurgence of Tibetan culture. Few Tibetans in Songpan are literate in Tibetan. Here, official policy and economic incentives work in the same direction. A recent reduction in Tibetan-language schools, the omission of Tibetan-language teaching in primary schools, and a decline of opportunities for those with degrees from colleges with Tibetan degree programs seem to undermine hopes in the 1990s for a renewal of Tibetan culture. The best opportunities for young Tibetans are in jobs needing good mastery of Chinese, and education has responded by neglecting Tibetan culture. One of our Tibetan-educated interpreters became a temporary lumberjack, complaining of the few steady jobs for people like himself

with college training in Tibetan studies. The Tibetan businessman who led the successful drive to make Chuanzhusi into a major tourist center was educated in the provincial capital of Chengdu and insists that (despite his promotion of things Tibetan in the tourist trade) he will send his children to college there or in other large cities. Only then can they get ahead in China's globalizing economy.

Conclusion

For the Tibetans of the Huanglong region, as for the Muslims, ethnic and religious identities are hard to separate, and this has implications for their relationship with the wider state. They are considered to be both *minzu* (minority nationalities) and *zhongguoren* (Chinese) but the latter identity is supposed to take priority for fear of "splittism." Religion is tolerated similarly if it is deemed patriotic, and is seen as potentially useful for tourism. The state has reopened some monasteries and mosques and thus accepted religion as being currently part of ethnic expression, but like earlier Chinese governments has tried to limit excesses of religious ardor and religious expense. It would rather make religion into no more than an illustration of ethnic unity and a commodity in the state-orchestrated market economy. The combined effect of tourism and rural education is having its effects, but there remains sufficient vibrancy in Tibetan and Muslim religion to make that policy look quixotic.

Communist Party leaders have known since the days of Mao Zedong that they cannot easily control minds. Tibetan lamas and monks find ways of asserting local leadership and handing down their traditions in the face of a secular education for local children that now carefully omits their own culture. The newly trained Ahong of Hui communities do the same, aided by a new consciousness of the wider world of Islam in China and beyond. Some of the Han people in this region, despite their presumed education—higher in theory than the minority nationalities—are also turning to religion: The elderly women of Songpan discussed earlier pursue in retirement an active religious life through their network of Guanyin temples, and not a few urban Han tourists making their brief visits to the Rear Temple seek instruction on how to properly offer incense to the Yellow Dragon and make their prayers before his image. Thus officials are far from reaching their stated goals of a religion-less order of ethnic harmony and socialist utopia, and some leading party theorists writing on religion are probably right to conclude that religion in China is there to stay, whatever their own Party's future. According to the essayists we have cited, social classes and the state itself may wither away, *contra* Marx, before religion.⁵⁹ Ethno-religion does not seem to be fading, any more than does the religiously tinged pro-center nationalism in the rest of the PRC.

This local study of a mixed religious setting in contemporary China has revealed a different picture from most other chapters in this volume. The difference lies partly in the intrusiveness of the state, not just through its religious

controls but through its ethnic policies, and through officially managed tourism and the officially supervised entrepreneurship that goes along with it. While we have agreed with the editor's introduction that European definitions of religion have had an enormous influence, and that they partly account for continuities in official policy through remarkably different regimes, the way these definitions were adapted to China, and their intermingling with older Chinese presumptions and newer ideologies of nationalism and Marxism, have decisively influenced policy. This doesn't mean that policy always has its intended effect. In the period of reform and toleration, state effectiveness is limited, partly because of the many priorities of local officials and partly because of the tacit resistance of locals, whether Tibetan, Muslim, Qiang or Han. So, to address another issue raised by the editor, we do not in our case find local identities replaced by global or Western-oriented ones, rather a continued fusion of ethnic and religious identity. Of course, this is the unintended result of the state's own policies. Recognizing 55 ethnic groups as minority nationalities (*shaoshu minzu*) within the Chinese nation (likewise called *minzu*), mostly with their own turf, and giving them nominal self-rule have the effect of merging territory, "ethnie" and faith in a way that may dangerously consolidate subaltern communities, as regimes have found in other places and times.⁶⁰ The sentiments generated within such communities are only intensified by mutual competition, by the state's condescension and its restrictions on ethno-religious expression, and by the decisive power of key Han officials in the so-called autonomous regions, yet paradoxically it is only by divide and rule, ethno-religious restrictions and close Han supervision that the Chinese center, even in the age of tourism, seems confident in holding together its peripheral regions.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Vincent Goossaert noted in a publication the same year as the conference on Casting Faiths that "The Chinese case is not unique. Throughout Asia, in colonized countries such as India or Indonesia as well as those that resisted the western powers like Japan or China, the western notion of religion has dictated the religious policies of modern states and therefore forced local religious traditions to reinvent

- themselves to fit that notion and those policies." Vincent Goossaert, "The Concept of Religion in China and the West," *Diogenes* 205 (2005): 19.
2. Peter C. Perdue, "Comparing Empires: Manchu Colonialism," *International History Review* 20, 2 (1998): 255–262; Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
 3. The converse seems true in at least one case. Madsen argues that Catholicism, being an essentially political designation, is also treated like an ethnicity. Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998): 53–56.
 4. Dru Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic nationalism in the People's Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Council of East Asian Studies, 1991); Melvyn C. Goldstein and Matthew T. Kapstein, eds, *Buddhism in Contemporary Tibet: Religious Revival and Cultural Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). See also the examples cited by Hymes proving that the notion of belief did exist in China. Robert Hymes, "Some Thoughts on Asad, Geeertz, 'Belief' and 'Xin,'" Workshop on Chinese "Religion" (presented at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 2005).
 5. Dru Gladney, "Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53, 1 (1994): 92–123; Louisa Schein, *Minority Rules: the Miao and the Feminine in China's Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order," in *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. Nicholas Dirks (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 289–317; Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
 6. In the interest of brevity we omit discussion of the Qiang, whose myths and rituals resemble those of the Han Chinese more than they do the Tibetans.
 7. Hymes, "Some Thoughts," passim.
 8. Robert Ford Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions (in the Modern West and in Early Medieval China)," *History of Religions* 42, 4 (2003): 287–319; Goossaert, "Le Destin de la Religion." Medieval Christianity had needed no overarching term. According to John Bossy, in early modern Europe the new term religion "planes over" the term Christianity, which itself hovers over the many branches of post-Reformation Protestantism as well as the post-Tridentine Catholicism and the Greek and Eastern orthodoxy. The bracketing of diverse creeds under the rubric of "religion" had been part of the Protestant effort to detach local worship altogether from the Roman church. John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400–1700* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985): 170–171.
 9. Wing-tsit Chan, *Religious Trends in Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953): 236–248.
 10. Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (New York: Knopf, 1966), 522–528, 545–548.
 11. Kuo Ya-pei, "Recasting Confucianism: Confucian Worship, National Education, and Dereligionification, 1902–1911" (paper presented at Workshop on Casting Faiths: The Construction of Religion in East and Southeast Asia, National University of Singapore, June 6–8, 2005).
 12. U.S. State Department, *Annual Report on Religion: China* (2005), http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt05/2005_3a_minorities.php#74b; Li Dezhu, Ye Xiaowen and Gong Xuezheng, "Gaodu zhongshi dangdai shijie minzu zongjiao wenti, xuwen" [A General Review of Contemporary Problems of National

- Religions, Continued], in *Religion and Nationality*, ed. Mou Zhongjian and Zhao Xueyi (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishing House, 2004), 2–25; Goossaert, “The Concept of Religion.”
13. Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince and the Discourses* (New York: Modern Library, 1940): 41, 149–155, 397–402.
14. C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society; A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1961.
15. Rebecca Nedostup, “Material Motives in the Nationalist ‘Anti-Superstition’ Campaigns in China: Ways of Reading Religious Suppression and Resistance” (paper presented at Workshop on Casting Faiths: The Construction of Religion in East and Southeast Asia, National University of Singapore, June 6–8, 2005); Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
16. Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964); James Reeve Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1983); George W. Stocking, Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987): 192–197.
17. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
18. Chan, *Religious Trends*, 217–264.
19. Donald E. MacInnis, *Religion in China Today* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989): 4; Li, Ye and Gong, “Gaodi zhongshi.”
20. Goossaert, “Le destin de la religion chinoise au 20ème siècle,” *Social Compass* 5, 4 (2003): 434, citing Nedostup.
21. Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 185–209; Duara, *Rescuing History*; Nedostup, Material Motives.
22. Madsen, *China’s Catholics*.
23. Stevan Harrell, “Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them,” in *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1995).
24. Thomas David DuBois, “Hegemony, Imperialism and the Construction of Religion,” *History and Theory* 44, 4 (2005): 131; Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Jack Goody, “Bitter Icons and Ethnic Cleansing,” *History and Anthropology* 13, 1 (2002): 1–12; Anthony D. Smith, “Nationalism in Early Modern Europe,” *History and Theory* 44, 3 (2005): 404–415; Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood*. See also Robert N. Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” *Daedalus* 96 (1967): 1–21.
25. Zuo Jiping, “Political Religion: The Case of the Cultural Revolution in China,” *Sociological Analysis* 52 (1991): 99–110.
26. Geremie R. Barmé, *Shades of Mao: The Posthumous Cult of the Great Leader* (Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 1996).
27. Nedostup, “Material motives.” See also Goossaert, “Le destin de la religion.”
28. John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996): 269; Nedostup, “Material Motives.”
29. Kenneth Dean, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Jun Jing, *Temple of Memories: History, Power,*

- and *Morality in a Chinese Village* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); Thomas David DuBois, *The Sacred Village: Social Change and Religious Life in Rural North China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005).
30. MacInnis, *Religion in China*, 10–32; Pitman B. Potter, “Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China,” in *Religion in China Today*, ed. Daniel Overmyer (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 13–14.
 31. MacInnis, *Religion in China*, 21–22.
 32. Potter, “Belief in Control,” 17, 25–27.
 33. Ye Xiaowen, “China’s Current Religious Question: Once Again an Enquiry into the Five Characteristics of Religion,” in *Human Rights Watch Asia* (1996): Appendix X, 116–145, 128–129.
 34. Guowu yuan, xinwen bangongshi [State Council of the People’s Republic of China, Information Office] *Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in China* (Beijing: New Star Publishers, 2005).
 35. Gong Xuezheng, *Zongjiao wenti gailun* [Introduction to problems of religion] (Chengdu: Sichuan People’s Press, 1999), as cited in Colin Mackerras, *China’s Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2003): 114–117.
 36. The lakes close by are also sacred and are viewed as female, as against the mountains, which are male. “Paired and gendered mountain and lake form the ideal Tibetan sacred landscape, and here [at Pure Crystal Mountain in Eastern Tibet] the mountain represented the male deity and the lake the female one...” Toni Huber, *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain: Popular Pilgrimage and Visionary Landscape in Southeast Tibet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 191.
 37. Huber points out “It is typical in narrative histories of Tibetan holy mountains (whether Bon or Buddhist), that none of the powers and benefits associated with such sites are available to pilgrims until a human spiritual hero, an enlightened being, first comes and recognizes and then opens a place for ritual practice” Toni Huber, “Ritual Revival and Innovation at Bird Cemetery Mountain,” in *Amdo Tibetans in Transition: Society and Culture During the Post-Mao Era*, ed. Toni Huber (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002): 121.
 38. Per Kvaerne, *The Bon Religion of Tibet* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995). For other interpretations, see Daerji and Li Mao, *Aba tonglan* [An overview of Aba] (Chengdu: Sichuan cishu chubanshe, 1991): 99–110.
 39. A gling bstan ’phel, et al., comp. *Gnas chen shar dung ri dkar po’i dkar chag shel dkar me long* (Zung chu rdzong, 1993). In Chinese: Anon. *Shenshan zhiyi: Xuebaoding jianshi* [One of the holy mountains: a simple history of Shar Dung ri] 1993. This Tibetan manuscript was translated with the help of our interpreters.
 40. See Loseries-Lieck on Mount Kailasa, for various accounts, one of them from the *Mahabharata*, describing how famous ascetics, including the wish-fulfilling cow Kamadhenu, “enriched the Kailasa with their spiritual power and made it into a *tirtha*, a sacred pilgrimage place.” A. Loseries-Leick, “On the Sacredness of Mount Kailasa in the Indian and Tibetan Sources,” in *Pilgrimage in Tibet*, ed. Alex McKay (Richmond: Curzon, 1998): 146.
 41. The lamas’ religious status is widely respected among many local Tibetans up to the present day. When we were interviewing a Bönpo abbot outside his monastery, Tibetan women passing by ten meters away removed their turban headdress as a gesture of respect.
 42. People’s Republic of China, Ministry of Construction, *Huanglong Valley: World Heritage Convention, National Heritage: People’s Republic of China* (China’s application to UNESCO, 1991): 90.

43. The largest poster, over 50 meters long, is not far from the Red Army monument near Chuanzhusi. There is even a religious touch in the envoi of the Minister of Construction Hou Jie of the Chinese application to enroll Huanglong as a World Heritage site: "The greatest wonder of all is the view of the entire district: the winding valley represent the movement of the dragon; the widespread calc-sinter resemble his skin; the many colorful lakes are his scales; the golden color of the mountainside suggest the light emitting from the dragon's body. More intriguing still, the bluish-green sea of the primeval forest, the crystal palace of the Xuebaoding Mountain and Yucui Peak, the blue sky and white cloud, the wind, the mist, the rain—it only takes a touch of imagination enlivened with a consciousness of the dragon totem to make a golden dragon come alive, and spring out of its palace, and swim freely between the sky and the 'sea.'" The author concluded on a more sober note: "Taking in all these, one is strongly affected by a sense of determination and strength. Thus the tone of the scenery agrees with the contemporary tendency of being practical and optimistic" (translation as in original). Ministry of Construction, *Huanglong Valley*, 94–95.
44. The public relations chief of the Management Bureau is half-Tibetan, half-Chinese, and the staff is mixed.
45. Zhang Xiaoping, *Huanglong: Lüyou wanquan shouce* [Huanglong: A Complete Handbook for Tourists] (Chengdu: Sichuan People's Publishing, 2002): 13, 22, 24, 46, see also 50–51, 103. Other tourist guides that express the same view include Zeng Guowei, *Songpan lansheng* (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1996): 34; Cheng Jiong and Yang Jizong, *Lüyoushengdi: Shijie ziran yichan Huanglong lishi wenhua mingsheng Songpan*, 33.
46. This may have received special emphasis with us because of our declared interest in cultural and religious events at the site. But the application to UNESCO notes the "exotic scenes of minority life . . . and the mysterious villages, temples, farming and herding, singing and dancing, of different nationalities" as part of the charm of Huanglong district (Ministry of Construction, 1991, 91).
47. Tim Oakes, *Tourism and Modernity in China* (New York: Routledge, 1998).
48. A parallel effort to push Tibetan material culture has been taken at Jiuzhaigou (Nine Hamlet Gorges), Huanglong's sister World Heritage site to the north, See Peng Wenbin (1998), Pál Nyíri, *Scenic Spots: Chinese Tourism, the State, and Cultural Authority* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006): 28–41.
49. Zhang Xiaoping, *Huanglong*, 101–103.
50. Sichuan Sheng Aba Zangzu Qiangzu Zizhizhou Songpan Xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Songpan Xianzhi* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1999).
51. Zhang Xiaoping, *Huanglong*, 101–103.
52. Kang Xiaofei, "Two Temples, Three Religions, and a Tourist Attraction: Contesting the Sacred Space on China's Ethnic Frontier," *Modern China* (forthcoming, 2009).
53. Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
54. Xiaofei Kang and Donald S. Sutton, "Purity and Pollution: From Pilgrimage Center to World Heritage Park," in *(Im)permanence in Cultures In/Out of Time*, ed. Stephen Brockmann and Judith Modell (Carnegie Mellon University Press, dist. by Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008).
55. Kang Xiaofei "Two Temples."
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid. S. A. Smith writes about the prevalence of what were called "superstitious" rumors in the Maoist period. S. A. Smith, "Talking Toads and Chinless Ghosts: The

- Politics of 'Superstitious' Rumors in the People's Republic of China, 1961–1965," *American Historical Review* 111, 2 (2006): 405–427. See also DuBois, *Sacred Village*.
58. Muslims who in fact built the city and lived in its northern section as horse-tea traders for over 1000 years receive scant mention on a new stele at Songpan's north gate. They have lost many homes with the construction of government offices in the north section. In a recent poster illustrating the future Tang city for tourists, Muslims, whose white hats are a typical sight on every street corner, are omitted altogether.
 59. Li, Ye and Gong, "Gaodi zhongshi."
 60. Anthony D. Smith notes that seventeenth century Europe, Netherlands, Scotland and England were each established as nations by attaching a particular religious faith (and the sense of "ethnic election") to particular territorialized communities. Smith, "Nationalism in Early Modern Europe," 409. See also Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood*.

Part IV

New Media and New Religion

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10

Japanese Print Media and Manchurian Cultural Community: Religion in the Pages of the *Shengjing Times*, 1906–1944

Thomas DuBois

Founded in 1906, the daily *Shengjing Times* (*Shengjing shibao*) would publish only for 39 years, but in that short lifespan would serve as both witness to and agent for vast and turbulent change.¹ As a Chinese-language publication under Japanese ownership in a region that would eventually become the Japanese client state of Manchukuo, it is easy to dismiss the *Times* as a mouthpiece for imperial propaganda; by the end of its lifespan, it certainly was. However, the longer institutional and intellectual development of the newspaper was far more complex than its inglorious ending would suggest. While foreign-owned newspapers in China were at the time by no means rare, few spanned a range of regimes as vast, or a combination of national, economic and social interests as diverse as did the *Shengjing Times*.

This chapter will examine the type of social ideology propounded in the pages of the *Times*, in particular by focusing on its treatment of religion. Throughout its history, stories that might generally fall under the heading of “religion” remained a source of interest to editors and readers. From the outset, the *Times* conformed to a pretense of journalistic neutrality, with unadorned news stories far outnumbering opinion-based essays. Yet its ideology is evident in what editors considered newsworthy, and here an implicit and perceptibly evolving definition of religion becomes evident. The reason behind these changes is equally subtle, involving a combination of social idealism, commercial viability and political survival, producing an image of religion that was alternately condemnatory, salacious and supportive. Even in as extreme a case as Japanese Manchuria, the press was never able to simply impose its will or ideas onto a readership, and the definition of heavily politicized concepts such as religion always remained at least to a small degree a matter of negotiation.

Before continuing further, it is perhaps worthwhile to consider precisely how the development of commercial mass media shapes the history of ideas. Print journalism, in particular, is often portrayed as developing hand in hand with

mass nationalism. Benedict Anderson and Eugen Weber, among others, have each discussed how the development of print capitalism in Europe coincided with the formation of nationalizing ideologies. However, while these two each raise the same forces of technological change, capitalism and formative national identity, they differ slightly on the causal ties among them. Focusing on the period of the Reformation, Anderson emphasizes the ability of language to serve as a locus of identity, specifically in the transformation of Catholic Europe from the “sacred imagined community” of those who read ecclesiastical Latin to the new, lay readership of vernacular, primarily Protestant publications. The latter type of publication was made cheap and readily available, a process hastened by the “thrust of capitalism,” and the proliferation of small, profit-driven printing houses. Jumping forward three centuries, Weber describes rural France of the early nineteenth century as still largely devoid of books and newspapers. Only with further technological improvements would the price of publication fall to a point that these materials could reach the countryside in significant numbers. Nevertheless Weber, like Anderson, emphasizes the novelty of mass publications, and their power to transform ideas and communities. For Weber, newspapers created a nation because they “established a unanimity of readership in which regional peculiarities no longer counted . . . the press advanced both the process of homogenization and the level of abstract thought.”²

On the surface, these two might appear to portray the same process, albeit occurring at different times and places. Yet the differences between them are slight but significant, turning on the question of whether mass media reflects existing identities or creates new ones, as well as the changing role of commerce in negotiating the two. Anderson refers to an existing body of literate, largely urban elites, who formed a self-conscious reading community, based in its rejection of the language and ideas of the Catholic Church. In contrast, for Weber’s rural masses, a new sense of community did not develop as much it was thrust upon them by cheap national publications that flooded the local market and overwhelmed local identities.³ In other words, the former shows publications reflecting an existing community, the latter creating a new one. Of course, this characterization somewhat exaggerates the difference between the two portrayals, and in reality, mass media simultaneously creates a community of readers and is created by it. While print media has a great power to shape ideas, a reading public is never simply a passive recipient, but rather what Kathryn Ragsdale (following Stanley Fish) has called a “community of interpretation.” Readers actively shape the production of print culture through various forms of correspondence, among themselves, with authors and editors.⁴ The ultimate arbiter is of course commercial viability—readers express their agreement with the content of media by choosing to purchase it.

The *Shengjing Times* reveals this same sort of interaction in a particularly complex setting. On the one hand, the *Times* was clearly a commercial venture, and as such needed to remain to some degree in tune with popular opinion.

It was printed entirely in Chinese, and like other Japanese publishing ventures on the continent, tailored its content to fit the expectations of its audience.⁵ The paper began in 1906 under private entrepreneurial ownership, and in 1924 a majority interest was sold to the South Manchuria Railway (*Minami Manshū tetsudō*, hereafter as Mantetsu), a stock consortium that was heavily invested in all sorts of ventures in Manchuria, and no doubt expected the paper to pull in its share of profits, as well. In reaching a Chinese readership, the *Shengjing Times* thus had to balance advocacy with popularity, and even if intended to further a propagandist message, the content of the newspaper still had to attract both readers and advertisers. On the other hand, the newspaper was an overt agent of transformation, first as a vehicle for the reformist ideals of the Chinese elite and later for delivering the propaganda of Manchukuo and the Japanese empire. The importance of the paper in representing the Japanese voice in Manchuria is evident in the degree of official interest in its operation. Behind the scenes of the Mantetsu purchase, the publication and financial backing of the paper included some of the key figures of the Japanese colonial project, and many of its financial decisions were made by top leaders in Tokyo. Over time, the calculus would shift decisively toward the latter, as the paper became less interested in courting its readership and more in educating them. Yet even at its most propagandistic, concerns over public opinion and commercial viability were never discarded entirely.

Over these years, the portrayal of religion shifted perceptibly, reflecting the changing concerns both of the publication itself and more broadly of Japan in Manchuria. At the outset, the paper portrayed itself as a vehicle of social reform, written for and by the Chinese intellectual elite, and owned by Japanese sympathetic to the same vision. Not surprisingly, these reformers presented Chinese religion as superstition, a social ill of a benighted society. During these early years, when the *Times* spoke of religion, it was in terms of beliefs and customs that needed to be purged, and more broadly of the need for a new, modern religion to serve as the foundation for a broader social transformation. Following its 1924 sale to the Mantetsu, the *Times* embarked on a new editorial policy aimed at making the publication more readable and accessible, changing its language and format to appeal to a mass readership. Under this new editorial policy, the *Times* retained its preference for institutional religion, but also toned down its moralizing disdain toward popular practice, instead presenting the subject as a matter of human interest, often one with a distinctly miraculous or salacious edge. As Japan moved closer to war during the mid-1930s, the press in Manchukuo was increasingly drawn into the needs and ideals of Japanese imperialism, which was itself uniquely devoted to grand schemes of cultural and social engineering. As a result, reportage of religion in the *Times* increasingly emphasized the loyalty of religious organizations for the war effort, as well as the key elements of state-sponsored spiritual transformation—cults of the war dead, the ritual regimen of state Confucianism and worship of the Manchukuo emperor.

Nakashima Masao and Japanese journalism in China

The *Shengjing Times* was founded on October 18, 1906 in Fengtian by publishing entrepreneur Nakashima Masao, and continued operated under his guidance until 1925.⁶ A newspaperman for most of his life, Nakashima embodied the combination of entrepreneurial spirit and emergent nationalism characteristic of the late Meiji. Nakashima was born in 1859 and remained in his birthplace of Yamaguchi until 1877, when the 18-year old went to live with his uncle Miura Kanki, a low-level military official (*koshō*) in Tokyo. There he became acquainted with a circle of military and commercial elites who shared the outwards-looking optimism of the time. He soon found himself overseas, first visiting Shanghai in 1890 as a member of the Sino-Japanese Trade Research Institute (*Nichi-sei bōeki kenkyūjo*), and while there began the study of the Chinese language. He also gained his first experience with journalism, writing uncompensated articles for the Yamaguchi-based newspaper *Choshu Weekly* (*Chōshū hō*). In 1894, he returned to Japan and was sent by the same newspaper to Taiwan to cover the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, remaining in the newly acquired territory following the close of hostilities.⁷

In 1897, Nakashima returned to the Chinese mainland to head the Fujian branch of the East Asian Common Culture Association (*Tōa dōbunkai*), and it was there that he had his first of many experiments with various types of business, most notably print journalism. That year, he and two business partners purchased the Chinese-language *Fujian Gazette* (*Fu bao*) and operated it under the new (although synonymous) name of *Min bao*. At the same time, he also opened a Japanese-language school, and made plans to run a steamship line between Taiwan and Fuzhou. Although these ventures soon came to naught, within a few years Nakashima was back in China, again under the auspices of the East Asian Common Culture Association. Again ready to try his hand at publishing, in 1901 Nakashima started the *Shuntian Times* (*Junten jippō*) a Japanese-language daily printed on the premises of the old imperial kilns in Beijing.

In his business dealings, Nakashima made frequent use of high contacts cultivated in Japan and the newly acquired colony of Taiwan. For all of his efforts, Nakashima seems to have been rather a poor businessman, such that his various ventures were constantly strapped for cash. At the same time, he found numerous ready backers, many of whom carried obvious political influence, as well. The 1897 purchase of *Fu bao* was financed by Kodama Gentarō, then Viceroy of Taiwan, who also saw to the improvement of the paper's printing facilities, enabling it to increase production from a weekly to every other day. Similarly, the *Shuntian Times* was started and continued with financial assistance of Iizuka Matsutaro a friend from Nakashima's time in Taiwan.

Such high-profile backing leads to the obvious question of whether Nakashima's newspapers were simply a veiled outlet for the opinions of the Japanese government. They were certainly sympathetic. In the run up to the

Russo-Japanese War, the *Shuntian Times* ran a series on the “central battle,” which was highly popular in Japanese military and diplomatic circles, and catapulted circulation to a yet unseen degree of prominence. However, such a stand would not itself be unusual considering the high level of support for the war among ordinary Japanese. More telling was the continued business relationship between Nakashima and individuals within the Japanese government. Soon after the close of the war, Nakashima sold the *Shuntian Times* directly to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, who continued to operate it under the editorship of Ueno Iwataro.

Following this success, Nakashima set about establishing a publishing empire in Manchuria. Soon after the sale of the *Shuntian Times*, he founded yet another publication, the multilingual *Manchu Daily* (*Manshu Nippō*). Within its first year, this newspaper reached a circulation of four thousand, and had gained the financial backing of the Japanese consul in Yingkou, Kubota Korezō, but still struggled in its initial stages due in part to its coincidence with the opening of the Mantetsu-funded (and similarly named) *Manchu Daily News* (*Manshu nichichi shimbun*), which created a scarcity of Japanese editors and writers.⁸ The greater problem appears to have been the backers themselves. Although from the outset, Nakashima had expressed a social commitment as the driving force behind his journalistic ventures, he was clearly deeply beholden to political interests. The mission statement of the *Manchu Daily*, which appeared in its first issue, spoke of the responsibility of a newspaper to society, which in this case meant his primarily Japanese and military readership. The ideological contradiction did not take long to surface; the same page that had promised a policy of strict editorial impartiality (*fuhen futō*) also included both an overt commitment to building “our eternal colony” (*eikyuu teki shokuminchi*) in Yingkou and to preventing a further southern advance of Russian influence. However, regardless of whether this reflected official pressure or Nakashima’s personal views, it was clear that he was no mere propagandist. After only a half year in operation, he came into conflict with Kubota over the issue of head writer Inuzaki Shintarō, who the consul had wanted fired and replaced. In the end, Nakashima refused to do so and recused himself from the operations of the *Manchu Daily*, which was then sold to Kubota and moved to Yingkou. This allowed Nakashima to focus his attention on his new venture, the *Shengjing Times*.⁹

Like his previous ventures, the *Shengjing Times* had to weigh the interests of its readership and its backers, a balancing act that was made significantly more complicated in a Chinese-language publication. As had the *Manchu Daily*, the first issue of the *Shengjing Times* began with a statement of social mission, although the difference in audience and content is immediately evident. Citing both the urgent need for self-strengthening through popular education, and the underdeveloped state of the publishing industry in Manchuria, the new paper was begun “to help the Chinese people.” Taking its cue from papers such as the Shanghai-based *Shenbao*, the *Times* adopted the newly emerging newspaper idiom, which combined the Western ideal of journalistic objectivity

with the moral tone of traditional Chinese social and political criticism. From the outset, the editorial staff were entirely Japanese, but the text was composed by Chinese writers, in some cases brought over from other publications. The writing itself was stylistically tailored to appeal to a diverse Chinese audience. The majority of articles were written in a highly literary style of newspaper prose and included pieces from such luminaries as Wang Guowei (1877–1927), who was paid handsomely for contributing a series of short pieces between 1913 and 1914.¹⁰ At the same time, the paper also included a small but regular number of articles in punctuated vernacular (*baihua*) prose, demonstrating an attempt to create a non-elite readership.

However, it is clear that like his other ventures, the *Shengjing Times* also operated with the largesse of the Japanese business and diplomatic communities. In addition to the initial backing of the Yingkou consul, the paper would continue to receive large subsidies from the Japanese Foreign Office for the next 20 years. These increased from 9000 *yen* in 1917 to 21,000 in 1918, the same year that the Foreign Office financed the purchase of a 12,000 *yen* rotary press from Japan. However, this backing was not necessarily inimical to Chinese readership. In addition to funding, the fact of Japanese sponsorship also brought the *Times* an unusual degree of freedom from domestic censors, which allowed them to recover quickly from a 1916 press ban instituted by warlord Zhang Zuolin, and was a boon to the paper's circulation.¹¹

Religion and social reform—1906–1924

The need to court a Chinese readership and ability to represent external, if not characteristically Japanese views extended to the treatment of religion, as well, and here a number of themes are evident. Appeals to the Chinese elite readership are clearly made in the most striking theme, that of antisuperstition, a campaign which had found great credence among Chinese intellectuals as early as the 1895 Reforms (from whence originated the call to “destroy temples and build schools,” *hui miao xing xue*), and particularly for the iconoclastic May Fourth generation of the late teens and twenties. Judging by the number of articles alone, religion during the 1910s was discussed most frequently in terms of new restrictions placed on religious activity. Rather than sweeping policies against religion in general, these were primarily bans on specific practices made by local and provincial governments, and new regulations were featured in the section on local news. Thus readers in 1913 learned that young girls would to be forbidden from burning incense at the temple festival of the Empress of Heaven (*Tianhou*) in Shenyang, that firecrackers were to be banned at the temple festival of the God of Wealth (*Caishen*) in the nearby village of Liu Family Shop, and that healers were prohibited from engaging in spirit possession (*tiaoshen*) rituals.¹² They also learned of the cancelation of larger events, such as the night opera in Lishu and the Empress of Heaven temple festival in Andong. Such items were reported simply and in a few sentences each, with relatively little editorial commentary.¹³

Despite the relatively straightforward tone of these items, the newspaper did sympathize with this broadly antireligious vision of social progress. More overtly than in the above items relating to restrictions on practice, this editorial preference becomes apparent in the coverage of newsworthy events in which religion figured prominently, such as the activities of religious groups, conflict over religious property, as well as human-interest pieces about unusual traditions or practices. Like the reportage of government actions, these items generally appeared in the context of local news. These articles, such as a piece on the conversion of a spirit writing (*fuluan*) temple in Jinzhou into a school for Mongol children or another on the commencement of an annual festival for a mountain god, generally struck an objective tone, yet the prejudices of writers would occasionally leak through in more or less subtle ways, such as the occasional reference to rural adherents of religious teachings as “bumpkins” (*xiang yu*), or calling the claims of local healers “nonsense” (*hu shuo*).¹⁴ Outright commentary, such as one short item ridiculing the crowd of women at a temple festival, or another on popular belief in a magical statue, which ended with an exasperated sigh at “the stupid honesty of our stupid people,” was rare at the outset, but became more frequent and overt toward the end of the 1910s.¹⁵ Even without this type of commentary, the constant inclusion of certain news items constituted an implicit criticism of popular practice, and by 1919, the peak of this trend, such stories appeared almost daily. The single month of April demonstrates the range of such criticism, including pieces lamenting the practise of divination among the poor, as well as spectacular cautionary tales about superstitious old women losing their property to religious charlatans, insane monks jumping into fires, and even an underground market in children for use in human sacrifices.¹⁶

The most stinging criticism of popular practice appeared in editorial essays that, unlike the news items, were often written in the *baihua* vernacular. The overall stance is augured from the very outset, in an essay from the first year of publication mocking the custom of praying for fortune at the temples of the God of Wealth, saying that the custom of placing hope in the gods was responsible for the sad state of China’s trade and industry.¹⁷ Not surprisingly, this type of editorializing returned in greater force during the late teens and early twenties, reflecting the newly energized iconoclasm of Chinese intellectuals in the May Fourth Era. A series of essays entitled “The Difficulty of Rooting Out Superstition” (*mixin nanchu*), continued to warn against trusting shamans (*wu*), and decry the beliefs and practices of the gullible populace. Another essay from 1921 echoes the sentiments of those 15 years earlier, calling for the foundation of a “new religion,” an idealistic vision of morality and self-sacrifice in the service of the greater good. Condemning both the passivity of prayer and the particularism of the Confucian family, this essay called on the new religion of China to “seek its blessings not in the next world, but in this one, good fortune not for the individual, but for society, for all mankind.”¹⁸ The conspicuous use of the vernacular in these essays is especially telling. While the call to write in vernacular was typical of May Fourth Era egalitarianism, the didactic tone of

the essays themselves suggests that their intended effect was less the inclusion of the lower classes than their education and reform.

Such hostility to popular practice was tempered by more neutral or even sympathetic portrayals of more institutionalized religions, especially Buddhism and Christianity. When these groups are mentioned, it is generally in the context of their charitable activities, such as pieces from 1913 on the founding of Buddhist grade schools, or various forms of organizational reform, such as the integration of the local Buddhist Society in Miyun County, near Beijing, with the national organization in Shanghai.¹⁹ Confucian societies as well appear primarily in the context of institution building, although this is tinged with a sense of regret that such efforts have not been more successful.²⁰ Christians are mentioned generally favorably, although the missionaries themselves do not escape criticism. On the one hand, Christianity was felt to provide a model of social progress, as discussed in a 1906 editorial entitled "On the Relationship between Morality and Science," which attributed western civic mindedness to a mindset grounded in the absolute moral concepts of good and evil, and in particular of heaven and hell.²¹ On the other, the paper was not sparing in its criticism of the sectarian nature of Christian mission. The same 1921 essay that had called for a "new religion" for China lamented the divisions caused by religion, Christianity in particular, and called for a society in which "temples and churches would exist only in our hearts." One frequently reprinted essay went to great lengths to condemn the moral double standard employed both by the missionaries and the Christian countries that supported them.²²

The striking exception to this general preference for religious institutions is the treatment of popular religious sects known collectively as White Lotus. Although an important part of local religious life throughout northern China, teachings in this tradition are known to historians largely for a propensity to millenarianism, and their ability to serve as a seed for bursts of antistate activity.²³ This pejorative view originates in imperial-era elite mistrust of popular religious organization, and makes its way into the *Shengjing Times*, which treats the groups with open hostility. When these groups are mentioned at all, it is in the context of violent activity. The Vast Yang (*Hongyangjiao*) and Yellow Yang Teachings (*Huangyangjiao*) were criticized for a period in 1913, with the substance of variously unflattering portrayals captured in a headline which rhetorically asked how such sects could possibly live up to being called a "religion." A few years later, members of the Teaching of Yellow Heaven (*Huangtianjiao*), who had been engaged in what the paper simply referred to as "banditry," were featured on the event of their capture, and again on the capture of their leader. In both cases, the paper referred to the members of the teaching with a pejorative characteristic of imperial-era official sources, calling them "religious bandits" (*jiaofei*).²⁴

A second theme, and one which is perhaps more difficult to immediately link to the interests of most readers, is the portrayal of central Asian religions, specifically Islam and Lamaist Buddhism. Concerning the former, Islam is treated as

a fundamentally Chinese religion, as evinced by the reportage of Muslim events from elsewhere in China, such as a 1924 meeting of Chinese Muslims in the southern province of Guangdong.²⁵ The focus on the latter begins briefly in 1919 and returns rather abruptly in 1921, the year Mongolia declared independence from China. Both instances deals primarily with the movements and statements of important lamas and living Buddhas, most notably the political activities of the Jebtsundamba Living Buddha (*houfo*, *khutuktu*).²⁶ While the political impact remains the primary focus of this reportage, a more sensationalist edge is seen in occasional items on the deviations of Lamas from *vinaya* regulations and on the possible poisoning of the Jebtsundamba Living Buddha in 1924.²⁷

Although the *Shengjing Times* was Japanese owned and run, Japan itself appears only very occasionally during this period, and then only toward the end. This somewhat conspicuous absence demonstrates clear editorial control over reportage of sensitive political events, the tendency being to underplay and euphemize Japanese influence, a prudent tactic given the sharp rise in anti-Japanese sentiment within China throughout the teens and twenties. Reportage on the unfolding of affairs in Mongolia, for example, focuses entirely on the influence of Soviet and Chinese actors, with little mention made of rapidly developing Japanese interests in the region.²⁸ The 1919 independence movement in Japanese-controlled Korea was reported in some detail, and then with a rather high degree of editorial commentary condemning the suffering and loss of life caused by the riots, questioning the intentions and patriotism of the instigators, and using examples from the British Empire to defend the practise of colonialism in general. What was notably left unmentioned from many such articles was any discussion of those from whom the rioters were seeking to gain independence, Japan itself.²⁹ The same held generally true for reportage of Japanese religion, which was only briefly mentioned, and then only in the context of a handful of goodwill gestures. For example, readers in early 1919 would have learned that the Japanese consul of Nong'an had invited Chinese and Japanese citizens to a new year "bowing ceremony" (*yaobai shi*) to celebrate the good relations between the two peoples. Similar ceremonies were performed by Japanese school children living in Manchuria, although by 1927, these were being performed in very Chinese venues, such as the Empress of Heaven Temple of Shenyang.³⁰

Reaching the masses—1925–1935

The sale of the *Shengjing Times* in 1924 revealed the high degree of official interest in the newspaper and ushered in a new era of direct administration. Since the early 1920s, Nakashima had been considering leaving both publishing and China, and in late 1923 began discussion with the Mantetsu consortium concerning the sale of the newspaper. The sale itself was a matter of significant political interest in Japan. It was announced to the Kato cabinet by Nakashima himself and the details of the transition were managed by Foreign Minister

Shidehara and the Fengtian Consul, Funatsu Choichiro. The Mantetsu consortium put up an 87 percent stake in the assets of the publication, most of the remaining investment coming from the Foreign Ministry, East Asian Colonial Company and individual stock holders. Against their initial inclinations to be silent partners, the Mantetsu majority holders were convinced to take over the actual publication from Nakashima, who returned to Japan. With the January 1st issue of 1925, the *Shengjing Times* was an entirely new publication under a new editor, Chihara Atsusuke.³¹

During these same years, press freedoms in Japan itself had already entered into a steep decline. Initially aimed at curbing the socialist press, acts such as the 1925 Peace Preservation Law would eventually become the vehicle for a broader agenda of press censorship. Even during these early stages, certain sensitive topics were closely scrutinized, most notably reportage of Japanese activity in Manchuria.³² Rather than demanding the inclusion of propaganda, bureaucratic application of press controls in Japan had left the boundaries of acceptable content vague, encouraging prudent editors to self-censor their publications.³³

Within Manchuria itself, Mantetsu-owned publications naturally supported Japanese policy, particularly after the formal creation of Manchukuo in 1932. Beyond the railway after which it was named, the Mantetsu consortium itself had broad commercial interests in Manchuria, and following a series of newspaper acquisitions and consolidations in the late 1920s, had emerged as the most significant publisher in the region.³⁴ Publications purchased by the Mantetsu, such as the Japanese-language *Manchu Daily* (*Manshū Nippō*), became outlets of overtly pro-Japanese reportage, as evinced by the coverage of the infamous Twenty-one Demands made by Japan to the government of Yuan Shikai in 1915. Although deeply and violently resented in China, the *Manchu Daily* portrayed these measures in a positive light, as a necessary step to achieving peace in East Asia, and condemned China's unwillingness to accede as a sign of duplicity. Within a few years, the same newspaper, now published under the shortened name of *Mannichi*, would actively support the foundation of Manchukuo, highlighting the suffering of the people under the misrule of Zhang Zuolin, and extolling the new nation as the true inheritor of the ideals of Sun Yat-sen.³⁵

In the years immediately following the founding of Manchukuo, propaganda in foreign-language publications, even those under Mantetsu ownership, remained somewhat less overt. While foreign observers remarked on the clumsiness of Japanese press propaganda, at least some effort was made to tailor content to different reading communities. English-language publications aimed at convincing British and American observers of the legality and legitimacy of Manchukuo, going as far as hiring a British journalist to pen sympathetic stories for the London *Daily Telegraph*. Read largely by the Russian émigré population in Harbin, Russian-language publications were virulently anti-Communist and often anti-Semitic.³⁶ As such, it is not surprising that despite the vastly increased importance of Japan in Manchuria, Chinese-language publications such as the *Shengjing Times* would attempt to appease their Chinese readers by continuing

to downplay the Japanese role in local politics. Even more than in English-language reportage, Chinese-language publications such as the *Times* sought to portray the founding of Manchukuo as a spontaneous product of local dissatisfaction, with Japan itself appearing only in the form of congratulatory telegrams. In short, while the *Times* was unquestionably pro-Japanese and actively supportive of Manchukuo, its new ownership had not transformed it into an active propaganda organ.

Instead, the more important change to the *Times* was its shift in orientation from a Chinese intellectual elite readership to a mass audience.³⁷ In 1927, the overall format of the paper changed, aimed at making it more readable and accessible. Not unlike other publications elsewhere in China, all articles were now written in punctuated vernacular that was similar to the *baihua* essays printed earlier, offering direct access to a much wider circle of readers.³⁸ Similarly, although advertising had featured in the paper from the outset, the space devoted to large, pictorial advertising grew consistently starting in the late 1920s.

Compared to earlier and later periods, religion appears less prominently during this decade. The most notable change is the near disappearance of articles advocating or even reporting the type of reform sought by Chinese intellectuals before 1925. In its place, the theme of superstition in the portrayal of local religion gave way to human-interest stories with a supernatural twist. Many of these, such as a story about a devout Buddhist couple in Yingkou who were spared a disaster through prayer, another about a rural cult featuring a beautiful woman who sacrificed live snakes, or how statues of the Buddha and Guandi took wing and flew away before a temple festival, had a distinctly sensationalist edge, and while still largely condemnatory, contrast with the more judgmental portrayals of the previous decade.³⁹

This is not to say that commentary on religion was completely absent. Institutional religions, such as Buddhism, continued to be portrayed in a generally flattering light. Buddhists were shown praying for national salvation while the newly created Buddhist Society organized disaster relief and enjoyed the personal support of major political figures, such as the governor of Fengtian.⁴⁰ The most approving portrayal was that of lay votive societies, such as the World Red Swastika Society (*Shijie hong wanzi hui*), also known as Daoyuan. The Red Swastika Society had been vocally supportive of Japanese influence in the region, and many of its contemporaries, such as the Morality Society (*Daode hui*) were at least passively supportive of Japan and Manchukuo.⁴¹ As such, although they were in many ways the inheritors of the White Lotus tradition so roundly condemned a decade earlier, groups such as the Red Swastika Society were now featured in a manner more reminiscent of institutional Buddhism, and mentioned primarily in the context of their high-profile charitable activities. The year 1931, in particular, featured the Red Swastika Society very prominently, with a series of articles featuring their local activities from cities across China and especially the northeast, including the opening of an orphanage and charity

fund in Dalian, soup kitchens in Changchun and Yingkou and a locally collected fund for flood relief in southern China.⁴² The occasional negative portrayal of such groups hints at their potential political significance, as in a small piece from 1931 discouraging the Morality Society (*Daode she*) from using spirit-writing to discuss national affairs.⁴³

Despite the increasing influence of Japanese imperialism and the new task of nation building in Manchukuo, there is relatively little during this period to suggest a program of active religious mobilization for either cause, and indeed, Japanese religion continued to remain a very minor concern. Japanese religions were mentioned only in passing, as in the participation of Buddhists in a 1931 disaster-relief effort held in Tokyo.⁴⁴ Bowing ceremonies, similar to those mentioned in the early 1920s, were held in Chinese temples in Fengtian and Dalian and briefly featured in 1927.⁴⁵ Shinto, the most characteristically Japanese religion, appears only briefly, despite the fact that by this time, most major cities had at least one Shinto shrine, along with annual shrine festivals. Reports mentioning Shinto, such as a piece on the 1935 construction of a shrine in Jilin, first appeared during this period, the religion and the event were presented primarily as a concern for the local Japanese community, who had donated the construction funds.⁴⁶ In contrast to the period that followed, neither the events themselves nor the reportage of them appear to have been part of a concerted effort to bring the Manchukuo population into a Japanese regimen of worship.

Religious patriotism and national spirit—1936–1944

The commencement of hostilities with China and later with the Allies during the 1930s and early 1940s prompted a radical transformation of the press throughout the Japanese Empire. In Japan, the 1937 institution of a “consultation system” for all media rapidly increased the influence of the state over the newspaper industry, followed by the 1938 State Total Mobilization Law, which enabled direct government control over vital industries, including the press. Both to enforce compliance and to obviate supposedly “wasteful” competition, newspapers were consolidated beginning in 1941, resulting in the closure of large numbers of publications, particularly at the local level. By late 1942 the restructuring of newspapers was fairly complete, such that “no one familiar with the structure of Japan’s media industries in 1937 would have recognized them five years later.”⁴⁷

In Manchukuo, this process of consolidation and control occurred slightly earlier. In 1935, the Manchukuo Press Association was formed under the control of General Takayanagi, the notoriously jingoistic editor of the English-language *Manchuria Daily News*.⁴⁸ It accelerated further after 1937, the year in which the British consul in Mukden reported, somewhat prematurely it seems, that the “emasculatation of the press reached its climax.” As in Japan, newspapers were closed or merged, a process that left only one or two publications each in

Chinese, Japanese, English and Russian. In 1937 alone seven Chinese-language newspapers were put out of business.⁴⁹

Throughout the Empire, this power over the press was utilized in line with a cultural vision that combined an idealized traditional Japanese spiritualism and bureaucratic modernity. This new vision required the active cooperation of the press. Unlike earlier periods, it was no longer sufficient to simply discourage criticism; the role of the mass media was now to educate and reshape the reading public. This change is easily evident in the aggressively nationalistic and propagandistic tone adopted by the *Shengjing Times* during the latter half of the 1930s. In contrast to the relatively muted coverage of earlier events as the creation of Manchukuo or 1934 crowning of Puyi as emperor (with the reign name Kangde), reportage from this period was steeped in politics. The January 1st issue of 1939 was crowned with pictures of the Manchukuo emperor and empress, and the front page of most issues thereafter contained some prominent reference to the Imperial House. The increasing control of central authorities over the *Times* is visible not only in the politicization of content, but also in the rapidity with which topics rose and fell. While in earlier years, particular themes might have gently evolved over months or years, reportage during this period is marked by news saturation on a particular topic for a few days, after which it would often be quietly and completely dropped. Not surprisingly, the intensity of propaganda evolved in step with the military fortunes of the Japanese empire, growing stronger as the tide turned against Japan. In its final two years of publication, the *Times* had become devoted largely, although not entirely to the war, the exaggerated optimism of the headlines reflecting the increasing desperation of the military situation.

The presentation of religion during this period was more overt and more immediately political than before, the most significant theme being the role of religion in the construction of Manchukuo society. In the eyes of its creators, Manchukuo was no mere colony; it was a new type of nation based on modernist rendering of what were promoted as essential Asian spiritual principles.⁵⁰ One early formulation of these principles was the "Kingly Way" (*wangdao*), a modernist Confucian ideology promoted by diverse quarters, including Prime Minister Zheng Xiaoxu, former Confucian scholar and long time companion of Puyi, described by British consular reports as "the only Chinese personality of integrity" in the Manchukuo government, as well as by Ishihara Kanji, one of the Japanese field officers who had been responsible for initiating military action in Manchuria.⁵¹ This political ideal had been coined in the early days of the new state, but was promoted most heavily after 1937, in which year the *Times* printed a rash of articles extolling the unique virtues of the Kingly Way.⁵² This was joined by an interest in Confucian ritual and morality. Even after interest in the Kingly Way as a political doctrine had somewhat cooled, the *Times* continued to report heavily on the Spring and Autumn sacrifices carried out by government officials, as well as on the exploits and official recognition of Confucian-style moral exemplars.⁵³ Even more broadly, the rhetoric of morally

paternalistic Confucian governance again involved the state in social reform. On the one hand, while the Manchukuo government promoted the moral and spiritual facets of Confucianism, it had less patience for the magical and practical. As a result, the *Times* returned to the topic of antisuperstition, albeit as a minor theme. The greater concern of the state was the reform of popular customs. These government campaigns, such as the 1937 national convention to reform the customs of daily life, or the 1940 initiative to institute reformed marriage and funeral customs, each received enthusiastic coverage in the pages of the *Times*.⁵⁴

As the paper took on a more serious tone, it became less interested in providing tales of the miraculous or mystical. This meant that the tales of flying Buddhas and snake-charming women that had appeared over the previous decade gradually began to dry up. I encountered only one such story after 1937, a brief item from 1943 discussing what might be called a “filial miracle,” in which a son healed his ailing mother by cooking a piece of his own flesh for her to eat. Yet even when the virtues of Confucianism were the source of miraculous power, the government and the press clearly found such stories too distasteful to dwell upon. In a rare instance in which it is possible to confirm that a significant event was *not* reported, a large ritual held in 1938 at the tomb of a miracle-working “filial son” (*xiaozi*) near Changchun was conspicuously absent from the pages of the *Times*, despite the participation of many high-ranking Chinese officials of Manchukuo, as well as the attendance of many thousands of pilgrims.⁵⁵

Just as the image of Confucianism revolved around the moral and political message of the Kingly Way, coverage of institutional religions emphasized their ardor for the nation. In an obvious parallel to the ubiquitous slogans promoting “harmony among the five races” (*wuzu jiehe*) of Manchukuo, leaders of different religious groups were frequently portrayed in various poses of interfaith unity, such as a 1937 Christian–Muslim dialogue session in Binjiang.⁵⁶ More frequently, they are shown rallying in support of the war effort: sending letters and telegrams to the frontline troops, or gathering for interfaith prayer sessions. One article from 1937 begins with a photograph of the opening of one such session, showing few dozen robed figures, neatly arranged in a row so as to visibly demonstrate the unity of various faiths around a single sacred purpose.⁵⁷ Individual religions received the same sort treatment. Christian organizations were only lightly covered, and then in highly patriotic terms, such as the visit of representatives of the National Christian Society to Japan in 1940, or the donations made by Protestant congregations to national defense in 1942.⁵⁸ The activities of the Red Swastika Society were again featured prominently in 1940 and 1941, during which time articles praised their patriotic and charitable activities as well as announcing more mundane administrative developments, such as the opening of new regional branches.⁵⁹ In 1937, Buddhists in Gaiping were portrayed praying for world peace, while others in Harbin were shown holding a meeting of the “Guanyin National Salvation Society.” The patriotic efforts of

religious groups received their most consistent attention as the war began to turn against Japan. In 1943, articles continued to relate Buddhist events, such as rituals held in Chengde, and the formation of a national Buddhist conference, but the real focus was their material and devotional contributions to the war effort, such as the organization of donation drives to raise funds for military aircraft, nicknamed "Buddhist airplanes."⁶⁰

This type of patriotic coverage was particularly important for minority religions. As a multiracial state, Manchukuo was meant to be a showpiece and microcosm of a racially transcendent pan-Asian unity, a point that was heavily propagandized throughout the Japanese empire.⁶¹ With this new emphasis on racial unity, reportage of minority religions changed from a portrayal as separate but equal to one of fundamental integration. In the 1920s, for example, the reform of Lamaist Buddhism had been represented as the key to spiritual rebirth of the Mongols alone. In contrast, by the end of the 1930s, all religions in Manchukuo were being presented as inseparable from a national and imperial whole. Above all, the minority religions were shown to be patriotic. After a period of conflict in 1940 with Lamas who could not be brought to heel (during which time one article called for the "sweeping away of Lamaism") the problem was solved with the establishment later that same year of the Manchukuo Lama Religious Society under the Chagan Living Buddha.⁶² A series of subsequent articles praised the active participation of Mongols in the war effort; Lamas in Chengde were repeatedly shown chanting scriptures for the benefit of the Japanese and Manchukuo emperors, and holding prayers to pacify the spirits of war dead.⁶³ After this, the problem of minority religion seems to have died down. The similar Manchukuo Islamic Organization founded in 1941 was briefly alluded to in a 1943 article on the "soaring spirit" of patriotic Muslims, and again in 1944, when the organization issued a declaration obliging all Muslims to protect the nation.⁶⁴

It was during this period that Japanese religion finally came to prominence, not as a replacement for the many faiths of Manchukuo, but as the spiritual banner around which they could rally. This policy was different from the cultural "Japanification" (*kōminka*) attempted in places like Korea, but still relied on the centrality of Japan to the spiritual development of Manchukuo, and increased in intensity during the course of the war.⁶⁵ The first large event to feature the spiritual significance of Japan in Manchukuo was the lavish coverage given to religious activities of the Manchukuo emperor during his 1940 visit to Japan.⁶⁶ Every aspect of his visit was closely reported, with special emphasis on his worship of the Japanese progenitress *kami* Amaterasu, prayers at the Yasukuni Shrine and later visits to the National Foundation shrines (*jianguo miao*, *jianguo shenshe*) built in Manchukuo. This visit was very much the model for the new spiritual orientation of the Manchukuo citizenry, and it is during this time that Shinto ritual first made a prominent appearance as the foundation for the cult of the Manchukuo emperor. These integrative policies, including the creation of a new government Department of Worship (*jisi bu*), commenced in 1940, and

were followed by a busy series of articles on the worship of the Manchukuo Imperial Rescript, the creation of National Foundation shrines, and solemn ceremonies marking the 2600 year anniversary of the Japanese Imperial House.⁶⁷ The following year, a campaign of equal intensity surrounded the public worship of Amaterasu, who was presented somewhat euphemistically as the “Spirit of the Original Source” (*yuanshen*).⁶⁸ Notably, each of these campaigns rose and fell quickly, disappearing from the pages of the *Times* soon after an initial period of intense coverage. Toward the end, the focus of reportage abruptly shifted to more traditional Shinto worship, in particular to mass bowing ceremonies to pray for a good harvest, for the health of the emperor and especially for the sake of the nation and war effort. While such rituals had appeared periodically in the pages of the *Times*, it was not until 1943 and 1944 that Shinto shrine worship, particularly that by the imperial family and in shrines integral to the war cult such as Yasukuni, became a central and sustained concern.⁶⁹

Along with the spiritual centrality of Japan, coverage also extended beyond Manchukuo to present the empire as a whole as a larger, fundamentally integrated region. The high point of this coverage was 1943, which featured a large number of articles on other parts of Asia, focusing especially on the role of the Japanese Empire in fomenting a spiritual revolution, particularly in former European colonies. From relatively innocuous pieces on marriage customs in Indonesia or Vesak celebrations in Thailand, such reportage also included calls to replace English and American culture with Asian culture, specifically as it had been perfected in Japan. The latter was expressed in pieces on the Japanese-inspired “spiritual revolution” in the Philippines (often emphasizing the support of the Catholic Church), the enthusiasm of Malay Muslims for the war and the hope that pan-Asian unity would overcome sectarian violence in India.⁷⁰

Given the intensity of the wartime propaganda that appeared in the *Times* by the 1940s, it becomes difficult, if not impossible to assess the commercial viability of the paper. Yet even during the period of total war, newspapers needed to remain viable money-making enterprises. Again taking Japan as a touchstone, the early 1940s saw a showdown between editors and the state censors, in which the latter won out, partially through governmental use of economic measures, such as paper rationing and fines.⁷¹ By this point, the *Times* was one of the few remaining Chinese-language newspapers in Manchukuo, and despite its monopoly and heavy government subsidies, still continued to operate at least to some degree as a commercial entity. Advertisements continued to appear in large numbers, with Japanese products prominently, but by no means exclusively represented.

Moreover, the type of attractive human-interest stories that became more prominent after the sale of the paper in 1923 continued to appear, as well, and many of these featured a religious angle. These articles were less tales of the miraculous than simple entertainment. Some were simple ghost stories, travelogues of mountain temples or accounts of local festivals, but others had

a clear moral. A 1939 piece about the Confucius and Mencius' descendants engaging in an unseemly (and very un-Confucian) lawsuit hinted at the decline of Confucian ethics in China, in contrast to the revival of the "Kingly Way" in Manchukuo. Other articles emphasize the feats of noble sacrifice undertaken by the pious—a Daoist who single-handedly built a temple on a mountaintop, and a filial son who prayed for the health of his mother.⁷² Such articles are indeed fewer in number than they had been a decade earlier. Yet their inclusion at all suggests that the propaganda net may have had a few gaps, and that even papers such as the *Times* still needed to put forth an active effort to court public interest.

Conclusion—Newspapers and the marketplace of ideas

The evolving portrayal of religion in the *Shengjing Times* in many ways mirrored the larger aims of Japan in the Chinese northeast. Under the early editorship of Nakashima Masao, the paper did seem to take seriously its professed desire to uplift the Chinese people, as seen in its round condemnation of benighted religious practices. After its purchase by the Mantetsu, a time in which other Japanese business interests were making rapid inroads into Manchuria, the paper aimed to capture a larger market, and its presentation of religion shifted away from social reform, and toward more interesting and salable stories of ghosts and foxes. With the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, and increasingly so thereafter, the *Times* adopted an overtly ideological portrayal of religion, one that was grounded in the Japanese civilizing mission and political structures of Manchukuo.

Certain themes within this long evolution are worth notice. The respective periods of Chinese reformist and Japanese imperialist ideology shared a common contempt for popular practice, and enthusiasm for staid institutional religion. Broadly speaking, the reasons for this preference are surprisingly similar: both ideological positions shared a general dislike for the miraculous and ecstatic facets of religion, and conversely, a belief in the power of religion to create and transform national spirit. Beyond these two trends, the entire run of the newspaper also reveals a consistent concern with the political impact of minority religions, and spins the activities of Lamas, Christians and Muslims in such as way as to include them in various national projects. In short, the images of religion featured in the *Times* were inextricably related to both sweeping social trends and particularistic political needs.

But returning to the ideas presented at the outset, how effective was this new era of mass media in shaping a dominant or hegemonic definition of religion? The answer is complicated, not merely by the changing portrayal of religion itself, but more fundamentally because even in the context of this single publication, one cannot speak of print journalism as a unitary phenomenon. During its lifetime, the *Times* underwent distinct transformations: from a reformist platform into a market product, and finally into a tool of social engineering. In

other words, the paper alternately aimed to talk about, appeal to or educate the masses.

The *Times* was most effective and innovative in its original incarnation—when it sought to facilitate communication among a like-minded audience—but was less so in convincing skeptics, or educating the public at large. Of the many images of religion the paper produced, the most successful was probably its early stance against superstition, precisely because this was a message that its readership was already very keen to hear. Conversely, even at its most propagandistic, the *Times* was never able to simply impose its ideas on the reading public, and messages such as the constant drumbeat of support for the Kingly Way or Japanese spiritualism, probably changed fewer minds than Eugen Weber's example would suggest. The reason is simply that even if the paper enjoyed a largely captive audience, readers always had the ability to disagree with, or simply ignore items that they did not like. Newspapers are, after all, newspapers: products to be consumed and discarded, and the same issue that might have waxed lofty and lyrical about the sacred national mission of Manchukuo also included the supremely prosaic: ads for skin whitening ointment, bug spray, cigarettes and acne cream. In retrospect, one wonders which of the two messages ultimately interested the average reader more.

Notes

1. Strictly speaking, 38, since the name was changed to the *Kangde News* (*Kangde xinwen*) late in 1944. *Zhengfu gongbao* [(Manchukuo) Government Bulletin] Issue 3080, September 15, 1944, 15.
2. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 465–470; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 37–46. Quotes from Anderson, 39 and Weber, 469, respectively.
3. This process is also seen in postrevolutionary France by Jeremy Popkin, “The Provincial Newspaper Press and Revolutionary Politics,” *French Historical Studies*, 18, 2 (Autumn 1993), 434–456.
4. Kathryn Ragsdale, “Marriage, the Newspaper Business, and the Nation-State: Ideology in the Late Meiji Serialized *Katei Shōsetsu*,” *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 24, 2 (1998), 229–255. On the difficulties faced in making the Chinese reading public accept Western-style newspapers, see Barbara Mittler, *A Newspaper for China? Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai's News Media, 1872–1912* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2004).
5. Albert A. Altman, “Korea's First Newspaper: The Japanese *Chōsen shinpō*,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 43, 4 (August 1984), 685–696.
6. The city currently known as Shenyang. Historically, it was also known as Mukden and the eponymous Shengjing.
7. The history of this publication is from Ri Sōtetsu, *Manshū ni okeru Nihonjin keiei shinbun no rekishi* [History of Japanese journalism in Manchuria] (Tokyo: Gaifu sha, 2000), 63–69; and Inami Ryōichi, “Ō Kokuyui to ‘Shengjing shibao’ ” [Wang Guowei and the *Shengjing Times*], *Tōyō gakuhō*, 72 (2000), 525–572.

8. The *Manchu Daily* was a six-page publication, comprised of four pages in Japanese, one page in Chinese and English, plus one page of advertisements. The names of the two papers translate identically into English.
9. Ri Sōtetsu, *Manshū ni okeru*, 39–46.
10. On the adaptation of the newspaper medium to Chinese tastes one generation earlier, and the creation of a characteristic form of “new prose” (*xin huati*), one often associated with Liang Qichao, for newspapers, see Mittler, *A Newspaper for China?*, 69–117. In 1913, Wang Guowei was paid 30 *yuan* for writing for the *Shengjing Times*. This was approximately one half month’s wages for him. Inami Ryōichi, “Ō Kokuyui to ‘Shengjing shibao’ ” [Wang Guowei and the *Shengjing Times*], *Tōyō gakuhō*, 72 (2000): 525–572; Ri Sōtetsu, *Manshū ni okeru*, 67–68.
11. Ri Sōtetsu, *Manshū ni okeru*, 120–123.
12. *ST* February 16, 1913; *ST* March 8, 1913; *ST* March 9, 1913; *ST* March 12, 1913.
13. *ST* May 14, 1916; *ST* May 20, 1916.
14. *ST* May 13, 1916; *ST* May 21, 1916.
15. *ST* April 9, 1919.
16. *ST* January 27, 1919; *ST* April 20, 1919; *ST* January 9, 1919.
17. *ST* October 12, 1906.
18. *ST* December 9, 1921.
19. *ST* April 10, 1919; *ST* April 9, 1919.
20. *ST* March 9, 1919; *ST* March 6, 1919; *ST* February 27, 1919.
21. *ST* October 6, 1906.
22. *ST* April 10, 1919.
23. Barend ter Haar has argued convincingly that the term “White Lotus” was itself primarily used by outsiders to criminalize these groups. B. J. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999). On the importance of such teachings to village religion, see Thomas David DuBois, *Sacred Village: Social Change and Religious Life in Rural North China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005).
24. *ST* March 30, 1913; *ST* January 15, 1919.
25. *ST* June 29, 1924.
26. The Jebtsundamba Khutuktu (Ch. Zhebucundanba) was the de facto political leader of Mongolia after the fall of the Qing and was highly influential in the independence movement. *ST* April 20, 1919; *ST* April 10, 1919; *ST* December 8, 1921; *ST* April 9, 1919.
27. *ST* January 24, 1913.
28. Kurihara Ken, *Tai Man-Mō Seisakushi No Ichimen: Nichi-Ro Sengo Yori Taishōki Ni Itaru* [One Face of Historical Policy Towards Manchuria and Mongolia: On the Taisho Period Following the Russo-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Hara Shōbō, 1966).
29. *ST* February 20, 1919; *ST* March 6, 1919.
30. *ST* January 9, 1919; *ST* January 13, 1927.
31. Ri Sōtetsu, *Manshū ni okeru*, 120–123.
32. Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
33. Louise Young notes that the robust coverage of events in Manchuria represented a break from an earlier, more pacifistic stance taken by the publishing industry. Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 58–88.
34. This was part of a larger consolidation of the press under the Mantetsu. The Mantetsu had been investing in newspapers since 1907, when it founded the *Manshu*

- Daily News* (*Manshu nichii nichii shimbun*), which would in 1927 merge with the *Manshu Daily* at a cost of 750,000 *yen* to form the *Mannichi*. By 1934, the Mantetsu had controlling stake in four publications (including the *Shengjing Times*) and total press assets of one and a quarter million *yen*. Ri Sôtetsu, *Manshū ni okeru*, 82–83.
35. As would the Japanese-supported regime of Wang Jingwei, the *Manchu Daily* had already begun speaking of the Kingly Way as the true inheritors of the vision of Sun Yat-sen, even before the foundation of Manchukuo. Komagome Takeshi, *Shokuminchi Teikoku Nihon No Bunka Tōgō* [Cultural Integration in Japan's Colonial Empire] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), 240–245. Ri Sôtetsu, *Manshū ni okeru*, 237–239, 291–294.
 36. One example of the difference between English and Russian publications was the coverage of kidnapping and murder of a French Jew named Simon Kaspe, the latter being more sympathetic to the “patriotic” motives of those involved. British Consular Report (*BCR*), Harbin March 31, 1933. In *Japan & Dependencies: Political & Economic Reports, 1906–1960*, Volumes 14–16, Manchukuo: Political and Economic Reports, 1932/1933–1935, 1935–1937, 1937–1941 (London: Archive Editions, 1994). *BCR* Mukden December 24, 1934.
 37. This is presaged in the direction taken by the *Shuntian shibao*, which in 1917 launched an opera competition, and engaged in a very public debate with another newspaper over its choice of winner. See Catherine Vance Yeh, “A Public Love Affair or a Nasty Game? The Chinese Tabloid Newspaper and the Rise of the Opera Singer as Star,” *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, 2, 1 (2003): 13–51.
 38. The question of how information from newspapers and print novels reached ordinary Chinese has been discussed by Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: “Shibao” and the Culture of reform in Late Qing China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996) and Cynthia Brokaw, “Reading the Best-sellers of the Nineteenth century: Commercial Publishing in Sibao.” In *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 184–234. A single issue of a newspaper could reach numerous readers over a period of months, and were often read aloud to or interpreted in villages. Thus, the transition to vernacular marks not only an expansion of market, but changes the nature of readership by obviates much of this type of mediated access. Henrietta Harrison, “Newspapers and Nationalism in Rural China 1890–1929,” *Past and Present*, 166 (2000): 181–204. For a further introduction to Chinese newspapers during this period, see the theme issue of *Twentieth Century China*: “Studying the Daily Medium: Newspapers as Subject and Source in Republican-Era China, 1911–1949” 31, 2 (April 2006).
 39. *ST* January 9, 1927; *ST* September 13, 1931; *ST* September 2, 1931.
 40. *ST* January 24, 1927; *ST* October 31, 1931; *ST* October 21, 1931.
 41. Although the two terms were often used interchangeably, the World Red Swastika Society was technically the charitable arm of Daoyuan, a religious society that was founded in 1928 in Shandong province, and grew rapidly throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Daoyuan was one of many new style White Lotus Societies (others would include the International Morality Society, *Wanguo daode hui*, or the Li Sect, *Zaili jiao*) founded or transformed during this period. Most of which were characterized by an expansive internationalism that fit with similar currents abroad, such as Theosophy in the United States, and the Eastern Buddhism presented in Chapter 3 by Judith Snodgrass in this volume. This internationalism and their close wartime ties with Japan would see such groups painted as collaborators after 1945. See Shao Yong, *Zhongguo huidaomen* [Chinese sectarians]

- (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1997), 301–306, Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 89–122, and DuBois, *Sacred Village*, 106–126.
42. *ST* December 9, 1931; *ST* December 8, 1931; *ST* November 1, 1931; *ST* October 15, 1931; *ST* October 17, 1931; *ST* September 15, 1931; *ST* September 4, 1931; *ST* September 2, 1931.
 43. *ST* July 25, 1937.
 44. *ST* September 4, 1931.
 45. *ST* January 13, 1927.
 46. *ST* June 9, 1935.
 47. This process is explained in detail in Kasza, 194–231. Quoted from 165.
 48. Notably, Takayanagi spoke no English. *BCR* Harbin December 31, 1935, *BCR* Harbin March, 1934.
 49. *BCR* Mukden December 31, 1937. This included newspapers on the far right, as well. In 1938, the Russian fascist publication *Our Path* (*Nash put'*) was closed, leaving only the *Harbin Times* (*Kharbinskoe vremya*). *BCR* Harbin March, 1938.
 50. Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 63–65.
 51. *BCR* Mukden January 18, 1936; Ōsugi Kazuo, *Nichi-Chū jugonen no sensō shi* [History of the Fifteen Year Sino-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Chūō koron shinsha, 1996), 131–153; See also note 15. The term Kingly Way was first used by Mencius as a counterpart to the Way of the Hegemon (*ba dao*) of the Legalists.
 52. *ST* August 26, 1937; *ST* July 27, 1937.
 53. *ST* September 5–10, 1937; *ST* April 27, 1943; *ST* March 17, 1943; *ST* January 25, 1943; *ST* January 5, 1944.
 54. *ST* August 3, 1937; *ST* December 15, 1940.
 55. The custom of cooking flesh to effect a miraculous cure, known as *gu ge*, was made famous by its inclusion in some versions of the *Twenty-four Exemplars of Filial Piety*. *ST* January 21, 1943. The event featuring the “filial son” was the completion of a three-year mourning vigil at his mother’s grave. Although this event was attended by thousands, and took place near the capital, there is no mention of it in the weeks before or after. See Thomas David DuBois, “Manchukuo’s Filial Sons: States, sects and the adaptation of graveside piety,” *East Asian History*, 35, December 2008.
 56. *ST* September 14, 1937.
 57. *ST* July 30, 1937; *ST* September 4, 1937.
 58. *ST* July 17, 1940; *ST* January 30, 1942; *ST* July 8, 1943.
 59. *ST* August 26, 1937; *ST* August 4, 1937; *ST* January 7, 1939; *ST* July 2, 1940; *ST* July 4, 1940; *ST* July 17, 1940; *ST* July 23, 1940; *ST* December 6, 1940; *ST* January 21, 1943; *ST* January 25, 1943; *ST* April 7, 1943.
 60. *ST* July 30, 1937; *ST* September 2, 1937; *ST* January 25, 1943; *ST* May 27, 1943; *ST* June 29, 1943; *ST* April 7, 1943; *ST* February 12, 1944. Not coincidentally, patriotic Buddhists in Japan and China also organized to raise money for “Buddhist airplanes.” Xue Yu, *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggle against Japanese Aggressions, 1931–1945* (New York & London: Routledge, 2005).
 61. Usually given in reference to the five races Han, Mongol, Manchu, Hui and Japanese/Korean, who were paired with Daoism, Lamaist Buddhism, Shamanism or Daoism, Islam and Shinto, respectively.
 62. *ST* July 10, 1940. Li Narangoa, “Japanese imperialism and Mongolian Buddhism, 1932–1945,” *Critical Asian Studies*, 35, 4 (December 2003): 491–514, 500–501.

63. *ST* July 23, 1940; *ST* December 6, 1940; *ST* December 9, 1940; *ST* December 10, 1940.
64. *ST* July 25, 1941; *ST* August 11, 1943; *ST* February 12, 1944.
65. For the chronology of the institution of this policy, see Wan-yao Chou, "The *Kōminka* Movement in Taiwan and Korea: Comparisons and Interpretations." In *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945*, ed. by Peter Duus, et al. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). For various manifestations of *Kōminka* ideology, see *ST* July 15, 1937; *ST* January 8, 1939; *ST* January 10, 1939; *ST* December 19, 1940; *ST* December 15, 1940.
66. *ST* July 2, 1940; *ST* July 4, 1940.
67. This period featured almost daily articles, of which the following were typical, but not exclusive. On the Department of Worship, see *ST* July 16, 1940; on the Rescript, *ST* July 17, 1940; *ST* July 24, 1940; *ST* July 18, 1940; *ST* January 10, 1942; *ST* January 17, 1942; on the Foundation Shrines, *ST* July 16, 1941; *ST* July 13, 1941; *ST* July 1, 1941; on the anniversary, *ST* July 19, 1940.
68. Amaterasu was also mentioned by name, which Chinese readers would have interpreted as "Supreme Deity of the Luminous Sky" (*tianzhao dashen*). In a front-page article from July 15, 1941 entitled "On the Significance of Worship of the Spirit of the Original Source," the head of the Office of Worship, Hashimoto Toranosuke explains the importance of this deity as the source of Asian spiritual unity. See also *ST* July 14, 1941; *ST* July 16, 1941; *ST* July 15, 1941; *ST* July 1, 1941; *ST* July 15, 1943.
69. *ST* January 30, 1942; *ST* January 21, 1942; *ST* April 10, 1943; *ST* March 24, 1943; *ST* January 8, 1943.
70. *ST* January 23, 1942; *ST* January 20, 1942; *ST* August 6, 1943; *ST* August 8, 1943; *ST* July 12, 1943; *ST* July 24, 1943; *ST* July 14, 1943; *ST* July 10, 1943.
71. Kasza, *State and Media*, 210–215.
72. *ST* January 13, 1939; *ST* July 17, 1940; *ST* December 6, 1940; *ST* July 30, 1941; *ST* April 15, 1944.

11

Showing Faith: Exhibiting Ōmoto to Consumers in Early-Twentieth-Century Japan

Nancy Stalker

The modern marketing of religion and spirituality is intimately tied to the development of mass media and the entrenchment of consumerist capitalism in the industrialized world. Some critics view consumer-oriented marketing as a form of religious commodification. They consider the commodification of religion and the diffusion of religious symbols for marketing purposes as inappropriate and as an ominous sign of how cultural life is increasingly infiltrated by corporate thinking in advanced capitalist societies.¹ Such attitudes tend to discourage the study of how religion employs tools like popular media and technology for growth.

In order to understand the growing interrelationships between media, consumerism and religion, we must employ historical and/or sociological analyzes that examine the beliefs and activities of religious individuals and groups. Using such an approach, we can view religious adaptation of media and commercial entertainment techniques as cultural creativity necessary for the survival of religious organizations in urban, industrialized societies. For new religious movements, that is nonmainstream religious, ethical or spiritual groups established outside of standard denominations or churches, such cultural creativity is an intrinsic component of their success, especially while attempting to build their initial support base.² Innovative marketing techniques tend to be adopted first by new evangelical religious groups and, when proven successful, are later taken up by established religions, which tend to be risk averse and prone to organizational inertia. New religions use new media to spread their mission as quickly and broadly as possible and, as a result, are often simultaneously the subject of popular acclaim and elite disapprobation. As mainstream media outlets generally present new religions in a dubious light, they must further counter with their own forms of media representation to overcome public suspicions.

One approach to analyzing religious development challenges the assumption that religious change is based on the “shifting desires and needs of religious consumers,” offering instead a “supply-side” explanation of religious change.³ Scholars arguing for supply-side religious change deny the likelihood of sudden

transformations in the “material or psychological state of the populace,” noting that religious demand for religious ideas and services is historically relatively constant. Rather, it is primarily changes in the “supply,” that is, the availability of religion, that provide the key to new religious developments. Presenting a market model of religious change, these scholars contend that organized religions exist in a competitive environment and succeed when they respond to new incentives and opportunities and when they market their product attractively. In this view, events such as the Great Awakenings in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American religion were less upsurges in popular piety than “successful marketing campaigns of upstart evangelical Protestants.”⁴

The rapid advance of industrial capitalism and related phenomena like urbanization, consumerism and the proliferation of mass media technologies, created new organizational and proselytizing opportunities for religious groups, not just in the United States but also throughout the world. New and relatively inexpensive technologies for image reproduction such as photography and lithography provided religious groups with a powerful and inexpensive means of disseminating visual images to diverse and far-flung audiences.⁵ By the 1920s and 1930s, life in urban, industrialized areas had become so thoroughly permeated with images and with mass consumption of goods and services that consumerism was a *mentalité* that assigned value not only to goods, but also to social and personal relations, including religious ones. Forms of visual commercial entertainment, including street theatre and the new media of exhibitions and films, further provided a forum for gathering and reaching large crowds in both urban and rural areas. The turn toward mass marketing techniques and consumer entertainment by religious groups in the early twentieth century is not a symptom of religious declension, but rather a demonstration of religious innovation, offering consumers both an increased supply of religion by new purveyors and increased access to religion through popular culture.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as American culture became increasingly commodified as a purchasable means of self-improvement and relaxation, religion assumed the status of a cultural commodity and religious leaders sought ways to increase consumer appeal by adopting the advertising, management and publicity methods used by other businesses and purveyors of popular culture.⁶ Competition in the marketplace of culture meant that religious organizations competed not only with other churches for the time and money of modern consumers but with other cultural pastimes and commodities. Church leaders skillfully negotiated the new environment by adopting techniques for promotion and growth. Laurence Moore chronicles the rise of various religious strategies for popularization and expansion, including the publication of sensationalistic “morality” tracts, theatrical sermons and performances on commercial stages, the marketing of mesmeric and other new forms of healing, the use of religious advertising and the mass media, and incorporating Taylorism, that is scientific management principles advocated by Frederick Taylor in the 1910s, into church business techniques. Following Moore, other

scholars assert that early-twentieth-century American religion flourished “not by avoiding the hallmarks of urban capitalism but by selectively appropriating aspects of it and nurturing a range of new spiritual identities.”⁷ The popular strategies adopted by new religious groups and charismatic evangelists such as the Salvation Army, Billy Sunday and Carry Nation “invented fresh expressions of religiosity and piety by incorporating consumer goods, popular entertainment and techniques of advertising and marketing into their spiritual life.”⁸

Although most scholarship on new religious movements (NRMs) in Japan focuses on the period after the World War II, the rapid development of such movements began as early as the mid-nineteenth century, when it began to enter the modern age. Furthermore, much of the scholarship on Japanese new religions has centered on the sociological role of particular sects in resolving problems for individual members, such as sickness, poverty and lack of community.⁹ While there is no doubt that providing social services or healing is an effective means of attracting converts, this focus on religious content has tended to overlook the innovations employed by new religions to attract new supporters.

This paper investigates the role of new visual technologies in the rise of Ōmoto (“the great source”), a Japanese new religion, during the early twentieth century when modern consumer consciousness became entrenched. Ōmoto was based on nonorthodox Shinto beliefs and practices and became the third largest and most rapidly growing new religion in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s. The group was founded in 1892 by an illiterate peasant woman named Deguchi Nao (1837–1918), who produced a scripture of automatic writings through bouts of spirit possession.¹⁰ It remained a small, local sect centered on Nao’s prophecies until the entry of her flamboyant son-in-law Deguchi Onisaburō (1871–1948). Combining elements of Restorationist Shinto, occultic belief in the spirit world and apocalyptic prophecy, the sect began to achieve a national audience under Onisaburō’s leadership after Nao’s death in 1918. Following a brief period of very rapid growth, in 1921 Ōmoto was accused of *lèse majesté* and suppressed by the state for its heterodox beliefs. It recovered relatively quickly, but was more brutally suppressed for supporting revolutionary right-wing political activity in 1935, when its facilities were completely destroyed and the leadership was jailed for several years.¹¹ Despite the official view that it was an illegal sect and despite mainstream media condemnation, Ōmoto claimed two to three million members in a variety of subgroups by time of its second suppression. New supporters were often drawn through the sect’s effective deployment of visual media like art, exhibitions, photographs and films, which were used to promote Ōmoto’s mission and to present Onisaburō as a gifted spiritual leader. Its success in using visual media and commercial entertainment to attract audiences in the first decades of the Shōwa Era (1926–1989) formed an important model for postwar and contemporary new religions, which make extensive use of spectacle and visual media in their proselytizing efforts.¹²

In its adoption of mass media techniques, Ōmoto replicated the strategies of many religious revivalists in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century

America. Deguchi Onisaburō shared the crowd-pleasing finesse Billy Sunday and Carry Nation and was surrounded by the same aura of homespun charisma. Under Onisaburō, Ōmoto became the most rapidly growing religious movement in Imperial Japan (1895–1945) for three primary reasons beyond its teachings: charismatic leadership, innovative use of technology and mass media for self promotion, and flexible accommodation of pressing social concerns and cultural interests inadequately addressed by the state or mainstream social bodies. Taken together, these three elements comprise “charismatic entrepreneurship,” my term for a combination of spiritual authority, an intuitive grasp of the religious marketplace, savvy management skills and a propensity for risk taking.¹³ The concept of charismatic entrepreneurship provides a frame for understanding not only Ōmoto and new religions in Japan, but rapidly growing religious movements throughout the world. From the late 1910s to the early 1930s, Onisaburō employed charismatic entrepreneurship in skillfully navigating emerging trends in popular culture and consumerism, employing multiple forms of mass media and entertainment to advertise Ōmoto’s wares and its promises of personal and social salvation. The use of new print and visual technologies of proselytization (i.e. exhibitions and films) helped spread the sect’s message to geographically dispersed audiences creating an imagined community of faith. In his creative risk-taking for the sake of mission, he was willing to adopt expensive emerging technologies, like recordings and films, for proselytizing purposes demonstrate a key characteristic of the entrepreneurial personality. The remainder of this paper describes how Ōmoto used public exhibitions and films to garner public attention. Through these media, the sect represented itself as an exciting new breed of Japanese religion embracing global and technological trends while remaining firmly grounded in native cultural and popular religious traditions.

Ōmoto at the exhibition

One of the primary venues for reaching a mass audience was participation in large-scale exhibitions. From 1929 to 1935, Ōmoto participated in a wide variety of exhibitions, which were mounted for different purposes and provided exposure to larger, increasingly diverse audiences. As the group’s stature and popularity grew, so did the scale, complexity and reach of these exhibitions. Initial efforts were small and specific to the sect, consisting of simple displays of Onisaburō’s art works to public audiences. The next step involved larger events in the religious and cultural arenas. In 1930, it participated with Japan’s largest established religions in a coordinated Religious Exposition, an effort that involved a larger commitment of resources and manpower. This was followed by Ōmoto participation with major newspaper and governmental agencies in massive expositions educating the public on the Manchuria-Mongolia region (hereafter Man-Mō), which Japan had invaded in 1931. These latter exhibitions were clearly a Japanese version of the Western-imperialist fondness for representing the “worlds” of their colonial possessions in exhibition form.

Large-scale exhibitions provided excellent public relations opportunities, along with the chance to proselytize and raise funds. In exhibitions, Ōmoto carefully crafted an image of itself as a vibrant, multifaceted religion, a group with international reach that nonetheless protected and disseminated Japanese aesthetic traditions and supported Japanese expansion abroad. This self-representation was intended to counter accusations by authorities, mainstream media and established religions that it was a dangerous, heterodox sect engaging in superstitious practices. Through exhibitions Ōmoto could show off, creating selective displays of objects, photographs and artworks that portrayed the sect as both patriotic and cosmopolitan and portrayed Onisaburō as an exceptional religious leader. Such PR, rather than direct proselytization, remains a primary reason for contemporary Japanese new religions' involvement in publicly oriented museums and exhibitions.

Ōmoto's first forays into exhibition were public displays of Onisaburō's artworks in 1929–1930. In early 1930, at the Fine Arts Museum in Tokyo's Ueno Park, nearly 17,000 visitors viewed his works over a four-day period.¹⁴ He was a prolific artist, producing calligraphy, paintings, sculptures and ceramics in a variety of styles. His artistic activity was not unrelated to his spiritual authority. The idea of a multitalented founder demonstrating numerous forms of artistic creativity is an important trope among Japanese religious leaders, from Kūkai, the ninth century founder of Shingon Buddhism, to Ikeda Daisaku, the current leader of Japan's largest new religion, Sōka Gakkai. Artistic "genius" helps to reinforce a leader's personal charisma, setting them apart from their ordinary followers. In Ōmoto, however, art was not reserved for the leader alone. Onisaburō further advocated the practice of arts among followers to help develop their spiritual capacity.

Encouraged by the positive response received by the art exhibitions, Ōmoto agreed to participate in the Great Religion Exposition (*Dai shūkyō hakurankai*) held in Kyoto from March to May of 1930. It was not the first time Japanese religion had been exhibited. Judith Snodgrass has described how the 1893 Japanese Buddhist delegation to the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago attempted to convince the West that Buddhism was rational and philosophical religion suited for the modern world.¹⁵ The target audience of Kyoto's Great Religion Exposition was, instead, domestical and the aim was to involve every religion in Japan and to display "religious goods" from around the world.¹⁶ The affair fell far short of this objective, hosting only 12 religious groups, drawn primarily from institutional Buddhism. Participating groups included Tendai, Shingon, Jōdō and Jōdō Shinshū, Nichirenshū, Risshū (a Buddhist sect originating in the Nara period) and the Soto, Rinzai and Obaku sects of Zen. These were joined by a small non-Buddhist minority consisting of Protestant and Catholic Christians and Ōmoto.¹⁷ Not only was Ōmoto the sole "new religion" in the collective, it was the only Shinto group represented.¹⁸ Each participating group was originally offered a nine-mat exhibition space (approx. 160 sq. ft.), but the established religions objected to Ōmoto's heterodox presence amongst their

midst and forced the group to house their exhibit in a separate building of their own construction.¹⁹ This proved to be a blessing: Ōmoto poured vast amounts of energy and capital into designing an exciting, stand-alone exhibit that would differentiate the sect from its more staid competition. Construction costs alone were 70,000 *yen* (approximately US\$35,000) and labor involved 3500 enthusiastic Ōmoto volunteers.²⁰ Ōmoto youth and women's groups from throughout the country were recruited to act as docents. While each of the participating sects equally adopted an exhibitionist and consumerist posture, Ōmoto was most successful as it incorporated a greater variety of the technologies and medias that comprised modern consumer culture.

The first major section in the exhibit described Ōmoto overseas missionary activity. Here, viewers faced photos of non-Japanese converts in Europe, Asia and the South Seas and a panoply of religious tracts in English, French, German, Chinese and Esperanto. Perhaps the most striking object was a large map of the world, indicating cities and countries with an Ōmoto presence.²¹ With a single glance, the visitor understood the visual suggestion that Ōmoto had transcended its rejection by the Japanese state and mainstream society and achieved the international presence craved by those very elements.

Next, one entered an exhibit on Ōmoto history, focusing on the lives of its founders. This featured implements used by the foundress, Onisaburō's mother-in-law, Deguchi Nao. As other established religions also exhibited the possessions of their revered founders, Ōmoto's display lent an air of comparable legitimacy to its own founder. Onisaburō contributed 48 painted panels relating the history of the sect, and this portion of the exhibit also featured dozens of photographs of Onisaburō in all manner of dress and locale.²² From early in his career, Onisaburō had recognized the power of the photographic image and had posed for numerous portraits since the 1890s. The *Chūgai nippo*, a nationally circulated newspaper sponsored by the Buddhist Jōdō Shinshū sect, marveled at the contrast with the public persona of other religious leaders.

In comparison to the chief abbots of other religions who sit on high and whose brilliance must be revered from a distance, Ōmoto's Mr. Onisaburō breaks the mold. He shows himself in photographs dressed as a member of a fire brigade and performing *yoruri* ballad dramas. He gives us a close look at his soft human side. . . . He even shows himself dressed as and working among laborers. He is a completely unexpected kind of person. He stealthily escapes from our conceptions of religiosity, showing himself as one of the laboring masses.²³

Following this exhibit, one entered a section with life-sized statues of Shinto deities carved by Onisaburō. Scale models of the campus complexes at Ōmoto's two holy centers in Kameoka and Ayabe rested in front of the statues, lending the buildings an air of divine protection. The striking hodgepodge of buildings at the Ōmoto campus in the Kyoto suburb of Kameoka, including the

castle remains of Akechi Mitsuhide, the infamous assassin of sixteenth-century national unifier Oda Nobunaga, had become a tourist attraction in and of itself.²⁴

The statuary was adjacent to the art exhibition, where over a hundred of Onisaburō's works of painting, calligraphy and pottery were displayed. The wide assortment of subject matter and form demonstrated that Onisaburō was talented in a number of artistic fields and able to fuse multiple traditions in new and unique ways. In an especially unique exhibit, spectators were next invited to try their own creative hand at a pottery at a booth sponsored by Ōmoto's art society, the Meikōsha (Bright Light Society). In keeping with the materiality inherent in the exposition's theme of "religious goods," visitors could paint their own souvenir tea bowls. This proved to be the most popular booth at the exhibit, surrounded by crowds pushing to demand their turn. The tea bowl booth deftly tied together both Ōmoto's stance on the spiritual nature of art and consumer nature of the exhibit itself. culture. It highlighted Meikōsha's advocacy of arts by the people for the people. At the same time, it invoked the long tradition of obtaining souvenirs when touring religious establishments. Visitors walked away with tangible goods, obtained in a frenzied atmosphere that signaled the excitement generated by this new religion.

The next section of the exhibit featured the activities and publications of the *Jinrui aizenkai*, Ōmoto's secular relief organization. In the early 1920s, in keeping with rising popular interest in internationalist sentiment following World War I, Onisaburō had initiated a variety of universalistic, humanitarian activities including Esperanto, ecumenical exchange and the *Jinrui aizenkai* (translated by Ōmoto as the Universal Love and Brotherhood Association, or ULBA). The turn toward these types of activities represented a radical departure from Ōmoto's Nativist roots and Japan-centric Shinto teachings, but allowed Ōmoto to recruit among both Japanese and foreign nationals who supported humanitarian activity but had no wish to convert.

Onisaburō created the *Jinrui aizenkai* following a 1924 expedition to Mongolia, where he intended to commence the spiritual unification of the world. The episode ended in disaster, with Onisaburō and his party saved from a Chinese firing squad by the last-minute intervention of the Japanese consulate. Nevertheless, Onisaburō returned to Japan with a new commitment to international activity and to Ōmoto expansion on the continent.

The *Jinrui aizenkai* exhibit featured a display of rotating dolls dressed in international costumes and a large mural entitled *Aizen no hana* (The Flower of Human Love), depicting different races and nationalities, dressed in both modern and traditional garb, gathered around a map of the world. Great religious figures, including Jesus, Mohammed and the Buddha, were arranged in tiers floating above the world, with three Shinto deities at the apex. The painting epitomized Ōmoto's paradoxical position as both Nativist and universalistic by portraying the people of the world as equals, yet giving Japan's native gods the most privileged position in the heavens.

Ōmoto's publishing house awaited exiting visitors at a kiosk with an assortment of books, magazines and pamphlets displayed as beams of light emanating from a portrait of Onisaburō. The publications booth conveyed the idea that Ōmoto possessed the weight and legitimacy afforded by a large textual base. It added to the impression of Onisaburō as a superhuman, multit talented holy man capable of producing a copious oeuvre of prophecies, poems and parables. Furthermore, the booth identified Ōmoto as a producer and purveyor of modern mass culture, complete with their own independent press.

In contrast, other participating religious groups made substantially less effort and investment in their exhibits, though they too used entertainment and popular appeal to frame their displays. The liveliest attractions at the fair beside Ōmoto were the Heaven and Hell pavilions, with Heaven depicted in murals and Hell enacted with costumed demons, complete with cloven hooves and small protruding horns.²⁵ Other religions' exhibits included Shingon's display of the implements and vestments of the popular saint Kūkai and a Catholic display of 26 giant portraits of Japanese Christian martyrs. Yet, none of the other religion's exhibitions displayed the breadth of the Ōmoto pavilion. As noted by the *Chūgai nippo*,

If you look at the other religion's exhibitions, they seem forlorn and display only the articles of deceased persons... These are carefully preserved items from people who lived long ago and burned brightly in the Buddhist tradition. But at Ōmoto, it's as if one is blinded by the increasingly bright, dancing lamp of religious tradition.²⁶

Kyoto's Great Religion Exposition attracted a total of a half a million spectators, many attending as members of organized religious groups.²⁷ Promoters had mounted an expensive publicity campaign including posters, handbills, newspaper inserts and signage sent to the main headquarters of each religion and to other highly visible public spaces like popular restaurants, bars and inns, bathhouses, barber shops and variety stores. Posters and signs were mounted in trains and stations throughout the city of Kyoto. These methods and venues for advertisements mirrored those that would be adopted for any other form of commercial spectacle or entertainment. The highly popular comic magazine *Kingu* was similarly promoted in 1925, with postcards, posters, signboards and balloons.²⁸ At the Expo, religion was commodified as entertainment and neatly placed on display in supermarket-style exhibits designed to lure consumers through diversion rather than dogma.

Despite overall financial losses incurred by the main sponsor, the City of Kyoto, the Great Religion Exposition was a critical and popular success for Ōmoto, drawing ever-increasing numbers as the reputation of its pavilion spread.²⁹ The sect had planned to capitalize on its newly acquired exhibition expertise in the fall of 1931 by mounting its own exposition in Tokyo in celebration of its 40th anniversary. This plan was hastily shelved after Japan's

invasion of Manchuria in September 1931. The resulting public clamor for more knowledge about the region would provide Ōmoto with its greatest opportunity yet for visual self-promotion. Onisaburō's public notoriety for the expedition to Mongolia lent Ōmoto a reputation for expertise in the Man-Mō region, where the Japanese army was aggressively expanding in the 1930s.³⁰

From early 1932 through spring of the following year, Ōmoto poured its energies into participating in Man-Mō expositions, sponsored by newspapers and by the Japanese army and navy. Exhibits were initially mounted in Osaka and Kyoto, but soon traveled to other cities in Japan and even to occupied Manchuria itself.³¹ In this case, rather than displaying its own religious and social activities, Ōmoto constructed lavish exhibits to educate the Japanese public about Man-Mō social, cultural and economic conditions. Exhibits included furnishings and utensils from Mongolian yurts; household effects and treasures from elite families, writings and paintings of lamas, reports on the coexistence of races and ethnic groups, and displays of Man-Mō products and economic activity. Ōmoto remounted this exhibit at the largest Expo it had participated in yet, the *Manshūkoku dai hakurankai*, from July to September 1932 in Tokyo. Attendance reached 1,800,000.³²

In its neat representation of Man-Mō, the Exposition followed Western-imperialist precedents for "exhibiting" their colonial possessions to spectators at home. Timothy Mitchell has asserted that French visitors remained part of, yet outside of, reconstructions of Egypt at the 1889 Exhibition Universelle. Such exhibitions were designed to satisfy European curiosity about territorial acquisitions in the Middle East.³³ Accompanied by guidebooks offering historical information and statistics, spectators could directly experience a "colonized object-world" characterized by chaos, marauding donkeys and haphazard bazaar stalls. Despite the cacophony, visitors remained secure in the knowledge that France would impose order and meaning on its chaotic colonies. Visitors from Egypt, however, found the exhibits degrading and were humiliated by the caricatures of their people, culture and religion. Ōmoto, too, attempted to impose Japanese order and meaning on its representation of Man-Mō, but in keeping with its own teachings on national equality and "universal brotherhood," exhibits were not overtly degrading and did not imply an inferior civilization. Rather, they gave the Japanese spectator the opportunity to experience an exotic culture that was, nevertheless, not completely Other, in a manner similar like the Chinese tourists to Tibetan borderlands described by Donald Sutton and Kang Xiaofei elsewhere in this volume.

Scholars are divided as to whether Expositions represent a coherent message. Some argue that expositions act as disciplinary, pedagogical spaces that works to instill certain attitudes about national identity and industrial progress, that is, an officially condoned narrative, among spectators. In most cases, the operative agent is the state or colonial authorities and the assumption is that expositions were subordinate to concerns of state.³⁴ Others, however, contend that such events are never subject to a singular national and ideological agenda.³⁵ Local

economic concerns and the competitive interests of individual sponsors intersected with, and sometimes subverted, high-minded pedagogical goals, so that large exhibitions always served multiple and often contradictory purposes.³⁶ Although the Man-Mō Expos were sponsored by state agencies to promote public support of Japanese expansion in this region, this was not the sole motivation for exhibitors. Ōmoto was openly critical of state policy in many arenas, including international relations, but its interests dovetailed with those of the establishment sponsors of the Man-Mō and Religious Expos, and it participated based on self-interested opportunities to promote its mission and elevate Onisaburo's reputation. In short, Ōmoto took advantage of the respectable and subsidized structure of the exposition to seek followers and supporters and to improve its public reputation. By employing panache and showmanship to present educational, yet entertaining exhibits, Ōmoto could attract new supporters and overturn public prejudices following its 1921 suppression. Visual campaigns were not simply oriented toward winning converts, but creating an image of the sect as a group loyal to the best interests of the Japanese nation and its spiritual development. Exhibitions portrayed the sect as a new kind of multifaceted religion that deftly combined tradition with modernity. While Ōmoto's origins were similar to other Japanese new religions, that is regional groups organized around charismatic prophets and healers, its visual displays demonstrated how it had expanded the category spatially and conceptually to accommodate the modern world.

Ōmoto at the movies

Exhibitions continued to serve as a major prong in Ōmoto's strategy of visual proselytization and the sect mounted multiple, simultaneous exhibitions until its second suppression in December 1935. Alongside these exhibits, however, Ōmoto adopted a new tool in its visual arsenal—the movies. As with expositions, movies provided an effective means of gathering a crowd that was not necessarily interested in Ōmoto as a religion. In contrast with large expositions held at a fixed site, however, Ōmoto missionaries could easily travel with projector and films to locations throughout the nation and empire. Films and documentaries were natural activities for a sect that had long cultivated visual media and allowed Ōmoto to showcase its impressive rituals and facilities and to further enhance Onisaburo's sacred aura.

Ōmoto was not the first evangelistic organization to recognize the potential power of film. In 1892, the Australian branch of the Salvation Army established the Limelight Department, which produced about 300 films between 1891 and 1910 to reach new audiences and raise money to support Army social and charitable activities.³⁷ They are often credited with producing the world's first feature film, *Soldiers of the Cross*, a twenty-two and a half minute film about the lives of early Christian martyrs that premiered in Melbourne in 1900.³⁸

In March 1932, Ōmoto formed 36 traveling movie squads to roam the nation, showing documentary and narrative films while recruiting converts and supporters. While 1930s urban audiences had become sophisticated consumers of movies, rural areas had neither the proper facilities nor the access to film-distribution networks to receive the latest fare. As a result, demand from grammar schools, youth and women's groups in remote areas, with little opportunity or equipment to view films, was so high that 20 additional regional squads were soon established.³⁹ Intellectuals and labor activists, like film-maker Murayama Tomoyoshi and critic Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke also recognized film's potential for reaching large public gatherings.⁴⁰ Yet despite their rhetoric, few intellectuals actively led film movements for social causes. Ōmoto was one of the few organizations in Japan actually bringing movies to dispersed, remote locales.⁴¹

Initially, Ōmoto youth groups created and manned the squads. They tailored their presentations to their audiences—sometimes adding local talent, often simplifying lectures or replacing them with fairy tales if children dominated the audience.⁴² The total program took three and a half hours, including an hour and a half of projection time and two hours of lecture and discussion. Ōmoto enlisted prominent locals to give opening addresses, which were followed by a brief explanation of the program, invariably including photographs, cartoons, documentary newsreels on Ōmoto and an educational or feature film. After the movie program ended, a special envoy from Ōmoto headquarters would rise to the platform and deliver a stirring sermon, during which film squad members would canvass the aisles, selling copies of Ōmoto newspapers.

One typical Ōmoto newsreel contained footage of a pilgrimage to a sacred island, a large outdoor Shinto ritual, a dramatic stage performance accompanied by Onisaburō's recitation, Ōmoto's annual poetry festival, and a demonstration of martial arts. Production of these newsreels incorporated cutting edge cinematic techniques like dissolves, fades and superimposition in their productions. The content of these newsreels, however, tended to highlight traditional cultural elements of Ōmoto activities, rather than its modern and internationalist features. Perhaps this was because rural audiences would better relate to familiar religious and cultural activities and urban audiences in the 1930s were increasingly nostalgic about native cultural forms and aesthetics.

Recognizing the power of this new tool for proselytization, headquarters expanded and reorganized the film squads in November 1934. By early 1935, Ōmoto realized that tailoring the message in the main film held even greater missionary potential, and they began to create their own dramatic feature films. This was more complicated than the production of newsreels. From its inception, Ōmoto recorded important events and commemorative occasions on film, which was used as material for newsreels. The sect established a photo-printing facility in February 1931 to mass-produce photos and reproductions of artworks. This facility was also used to print and distribute copies of newsreels.⁴³ Feature films required a much larger, more creative effort. A Sacred Film Division (*Eiga*

shingekibu) was established in 1935 year at Ōmoto's headquarters in Kameoka. While the choice of locale may seem remote from the Japanese cinema industry, it was, in fact, close to Nikkatsu studios in Saga, where Onisaburō had cultivated close ties with prominent actors and directors and established an Ōmoto branch in 1930.⁴⁴

Onisaburō embraced the opportunity to appear in the movies, which provided a platform for further enhancing both his fame and spiritual aura. The first major production was entitled *Reizan shūgyō* (Ascetic Exercises on Spirit Mountain), an autobiographical film account of Onisaburō's personal experiences of the spirit world.⁴⁵ Not content with a simple starring role, however, Onisaburō also single-handedly created, directed and starred in his own silent-film production, *Shōwa no shichifukujin*, or "the Seven Lucky Gods of the Shōwa period."⁴⁶

This is a difficult-to-classify film, neither drama nor documentary, neither slapstick nor satire, but rather a series of semi-comedic vignettes which feature Onisaburō dressed in elaborate costumes representing each of the Seven Lucky Gods, a very popular group of diverse deities believed to bring good fortune and happiness. Each deity is identified with Ōmoto in multiple ways. Some of their costumes feature the sect's logo. Each of the seven vignettes were filmed in different Ōmoto locales giving viewers a look at the sect's flourishing fortunes in the form of land and architecture. Ebisu, a deity of fishing, farming, commerce and the home emerges from Onisaburō's memorialized birthplace in Anao; the warrior-like Bishamonten, one of the four guardian kings of Buddhism, patrols the ramparts of the castle; and Benzaiten, patroness of Japanese artists and gamblers derived from the Indian goddess Sarasvati, graces the opulent Gekkyuden (Palace of the Moon). Although amateurish and light-hearted, the film contained a powerful message at its core, associating popular conceptions of Japanese sacrality with Onisaburō and Ōmoto on temporal, spatial and individual levels. It visually asserted that in the modern era, it was Onisaburō who represented creative, transformative and divine power incarnate, a subtly subversive statement given that divinity was reserved for the emperor alone.

The completed film was both shown to audiences by the movie squads and offered for sale in advertisements placed in Ōmoto journals and newspapers. Hyperbolic copy proclaimed the work as "fantastic beyond imagination" and claimed it held auspicious powers, such as the ability to "alleviate the three great calamities (fire, flood and storm)."⁴⁷ The ad campaign even offered early buyers a special discount. By hyping the film as a magico-religious talisman, Ōmoto creatively extended the definition of the traditional religious amulet, a product purchased to help procure practical benefit or ward off bad luck, to a product of modern media culture. While not explicitly stated in the ads, it is likely that Onisaburō's image was considered the source of power in the film-talisman.

In sum, Onisaburō used moving pictures, the first truly "mass" popular medium, to impart materiality to heretofore imagined sacred personalities, to

supplement cherished two-dimensional images and actualize archetypal patterns. Furthermore, he cleverly associated all this with himself and his sect. Walter Benjamin once expressed his hope that film and other technologies of mechanical reproduction would make the ritual and cult value of art “recede into the background.”⁴⁸ Yet movies seemed a natural partner for religion, particularly in the first few decades of the twentieth century, when they remained something of a mystery and novelty, a source of potential magic for unsophisticated audiences. Benjamin had simply ignored the possibility that the film-maker themselves might also be the very purveyor of cult values.

Conclusion

It should be unsurprising that religious activity would be influenced by consumerism and mass media, whether in Japan or elsewhere. Ōmoto entrepreneurially recognized the power of visual images and the increasingly influential role they would play in modern life. The multiple avenues of visual and media representation it pursued allowed the sect to engage in market differentiation, tailoring its sales pitch according to audience: art exhibitions emphasized the versatility, spirit and genius of its charismatic leader and the promise of art for everyman; expositions stressed the modern and international character of Ōmoto, its status as an educational, humanitarian and universalistic body that transcended the Japanese state; newsreels and movies often featured traditional Japanese cultural and religious practices. The sect thus used visual culture to promote itself simultaneously as both “modern” and “traditional,” revealing a Janus-faced vision of Japanese national and religious identity that appealed to many Japanese consumers.

Statistics for Ōmoto missionary activities from March to December of 1935 confirm the relative success of their new techniques, demonstrating that attendance for movie programs and exhibitions outpaced traditional activities by a huge margin. Movies often reached over a thousand viewers per presentation. Given the army of zealous film squad missionaries distributed throughout Japan, Ōmoto’s message often reached several thousand sets of eyes and ears per day. In the last week of April 1935, nearly 30,000 persons in ten different provinces attended Ōmoto film and exhibition programs.⁴⁹ By contrast, Ōmoto’s more traditional lecture and seminar activities, which other new and established religions continued to rely upon for drawing converts, drew only 2000 over the same period, with attendance rarely breaking one hundred per meeting.⁵⁰

It is difficult to discern the extent to which audiences internalized Ōmoto’s message, but greater public awareness of the sect through increased visibility likely resulted in greater acceptance of the sect, as evidenced by membership that climbed into the millions by the early 1930s. Given the opportunity to judge for themselves, the buying public did not necessarily agree with the state and mainstream media’s demonization of the sect. The excitement generated by negative publicity may have even enhanced Ōmoto’s appeal. Increased visibility

in the public eye is, however, a double-edged sword, garnering greater popular support while stoking the suspicions of official and elite society. This was the case for Ōmoto. The state warily eyed its rapid growth and responded with a brutal suppression in 1935.

Finally, Japanese NRMs have increasingly adopted new techniques that center on visual display and popular entertainment as a proselytizing tool. Ōmoto's earlier success was not forgotten by the new religions that proliferated in the postwar period under the freedom of religion granted by the new Constitution, creating an even more competitive religious market. While many extensively employ print media and audio cassettes in their missionary activity, it was the visual spectacle or image, whether art museums, elaborately staged rituals and events, big budget animation or Internet websites (discussed below), that became a standard instrument in the new religions' toolbox of techniques for generating positive PR and attracting new followers. Other visual media extensively used by contemporary NRMs include video newsletters, CD-ROMs, *manga* comics, and satellite broadcasts of festivals and special events.⁵¹

Japan is not unique in this sense. In the contemporary United States, the advent of televangelism in the 1970s and the more recent production of movies like the Church of Scientology's *Battleship Earth* and Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, representing the views of a Catholic splinter sect, demonstrate that the penchant for new and evangelical groups' uses of mass appeal techniques is not limited to Japan. While a portion of the American public embraces these products, another portion vociferously criticizes both the products and their sponsors. In the United States, nonsect-specific Christian conservatism is particularly making huge strides in the American religious market, in part through its savvy use of popular entertainment, from the *Left Behind* series of novels to Christian rock, teen-oriented versions of the Bible, video games and dedicated cable channels. Christian cultural products are growing exponentially and increasingly influence more mainstream cultural offerings.

The latest revolution in media technology is undoubtedly the Internet, which religious groups throughout the world have enthusiastically embraced. Today almost every contemporary religious group is present on the Internet.⁵² Early and innovative usages were especially noticeable among NRMs, but established religions rapidly adopted this new medium, as the perception that a web presence was vital for maintaining status, authority and "making a good appearance."⁵³ The interactive potential of the Internet, along with its focused audience and freedom from temporality, provided significant advantages over older one-way broadcast media or temporally fixed lectures or performances. Early 1990s scholars of religion and the Internet predicted it would fundamentally change the nature of religion and become a "focal sacred space of dispersed information society" but subsequent activity has suggested that it only acts as a supplement to religion—people still prefer to meet in person for most religious purposes.⁵⁴ In short, the media does not fundamentally change the message or practices of religious groups; it simply provides greater access and a new

form of presentation. Furthermore, the equal accessibility of Internet websites enables a “multiplication” of religious voices such that NRMs can compete with established religious institutions, advocating alternative beliefs, practices and worldviews. Within established religions, the Internet facilitates formation of interest groups that may challenge orthodox authority. In sum, new Internet technology, like the media technologies discussed in this paper, facilitates the expansion of religious supply and presents increased choice and opportunity for religious consumers.

Notes

1. See, for example, Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2005).
2. See, for example, Geoffrey K. Nelson, *Cults, New Religions and Religious Creativity* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987) and Laurence R. Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
3. Roger Finke and Laurence Iannaccone, “Supply-Side Explanations for Religious Change,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 527, Religion in the Nineties (May, 1993), 27–39.
4. *Ibid.*, 29.
5. David Morgan, “Protestant Visual Culture and the Challenges of Urban America during the Progressive Era,” in John M. Giggie and Diane Winston, eds, *Faith in the Market: Religion and the Rise of Urban Commercial Culture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002).
6. Moore, 5–6.
7. Giggie and Winston, 1.
8. *Ibid.* The Salvation Army, established in London in 1865 by independent evangelist William Booth, paraded down urban streets in uniform accompanied by brass bands and colorful flags. Their visual displays grew more elaborate over time and included presentations incorporating photographic slides and living tableaux. Successfully imported to Japan in the 1890s, the Army likely served as a model for later Ōmoto activity. Billy Sunday, a professional baseball player turned preacher fostered a cult of personality in his revival meetings that attracted millions in the early 1910s. Carry Nation used vaudeville halls and street theatre to stage her sermons on the evils of alcohol. She and Sunday sold souvenirs commemorating attendance at their events.
9. See, for example, H. Byron Earhart, *Gedatsu-kai and Religion in Contemporary Japan: Returning to the Center* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), Helen Hardacre, *Lay Buddhism in Contemporary Japan: Reiyūkai Kyōdan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) and Helen Hardacre, *Kurozumikyō and the New Religions of Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). Winston Davis, *Dojo: Magic and Exorcism in Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980).
10. For a biography of Deguchi Nao in English, see Emily Groszos Ooms, *Women and Millenarian Protest in Meiji Japan: Deguchi Nao and ōmotokyō* (Ithaca: Cornell East Asia Series, 1993).
11. Accounts of Ōmoto’s suppression in English can be found in Sheldon Garon, “State and Religion in Imperial Japan,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 12, 2 (1986) and

- Peter Nadolski, "The Socio-Political Background of the 1921 and 1935 Ōmoto Suppressions in Japan," Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1974.
12. For brief summaries of Agonshū and Sōka Gakkai activities, see *SKJJ*, 7–8, 170–173. In English, see Ian Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), 194–233 on Agonshū.
 13. Nancy Stalker, *Prophet Motive: Deguchi Onisaburō and the Rise of a New Religion in Imperial Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii press, 2008).
 14. Ōmoto nanajunenshi hensankai, ed. *Ōmoto nanajunenshi* (hereafter *ONS*), 2 volumes (Kameoka: Ōmoto, 1964–1967), vol. 2, 62–67.
 15. Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).
 16. Nihon rekishikai, *Shūkyō hakurankaishi* (Kyoto: Shūkyō dai hakurankai, 1931), 1.
 17. *Ibid.*, 23. Under the Japanese system of state management of religion at the time, all Protestant and Catholic denominations were grouped together into two categories.
 18. The official ideological stance that State Shinto was aligned with civic duty and exempt from the state's definition of religious organizations, explains the absence of Shinto shrine organizations. The absence of all 13 official Shinto sects, however, suggests that they were prohibited from participating by the state, failed to see the profit of this opportunity, or simply were not invited.
 19. *ONS*, vol. 2, 64.
 20. Nihon rekishikai, 16–17. Considering that the total admission fees earned for the entire exposition amounted to only 203,000 *yen* (at 50 *yen* per person), this was indeed a substantial investment.
 21. Nihon rekishikai, 120–135.
 22. *Ibid.*
 23. *Chūgai nippo* (hereafter *CN*) (March 25, 1930).
 24. Umesao Tadao, interviewed by author, Osaka, March 18, 2000.
 25. Nihon rekishikai, preface.
 26. Aoi Itsuko, "Shūkyōhaku de Hane o Hirogeru Ōmotokyō," *Chūgai nippo* (March 25, 1930), 1.
 27. Nihon rekishikai, 144–149, 172–177. According to the official count, total attendance for the Exposition was 894,411, but 335,217 entries were attributed to persons related to the Exposition.
 28. Darrell William Davis, *Picturing Japaneseness: Monumental Style, National Identity, Japanese Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 50.
 29. In the first two weeks, attendance at Ōmoto was generally one-third to one-half the attendance at the main hall. A comparison of attendance statistics collected by Ōmoto and by the Expositions demonstrates that there were eight days, all in the last few weeks, on which entries to Ōmoto exceeded those of the main hall. The number of visitors to Ōmoto ranged from 1680 to 18,378, averaging over 5000 per day and exceeding 10,000 on six days.
 30. Accounts of the Mongolian expedition in Japanese include *ONS*, vol. 1, 716–766; Murakami Shigeyoshi, *Hyōden Deguchi Onisaburō* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1979), 160–179; Deguchi Kyōtarō, *Kyōjin Deguchi Onisaburō* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1967), 256–290. Also see Yasuaki Deguchi, *Deguchi Onisaburō nyūmo hiwa* (Kameoka: Izutomizu, 1965). Onisaburō's own account of the affair is available in "Nyū Mō ki," in his *Zenshū*, Volume 6. Man-Mō was the most commonly used terminology to designate this area in the 1920s and early 1930s. With the establishment of the Manchukuo

- puppet state, the “Mō” was often excised and the area commonly referred to as Manshū or Manchukuo.
31. *ONS*, vol. 2, 127–129. For more on the Japanese public’s interest in the Manchurian region during this period, see Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
32. *Ibid.*
33. Timothy Mitchell, “Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order,” in Nicholas Dirks, ed., *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 289–317.
34. Robert Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) and Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
35. Angus Lockyer, “Japan at the Exhibition, 1867–1970,” Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2000, 195.
36. *Ibid.*, 26.
37. The Salvation Army in Australia, “Limelight Department Established,” <http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/museum/SoldiersOfTheCross/page4.htm>.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *ONS*, vol. 2, 246. Deguchi Kyōtaro, 353–354.
40. H. D. Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 78, 102–103, 113–114.
41. A few other examples include socialist storyteller Takamatsu Toyojirō who toured the country in 1900 with projector and films, combining performance with promotion of the labor movement. See Komatsu Hiroshi, “Some Characteristics of Japanese Cinema before World War I,” in Arthur Nalleti and David Desser, eds, *Reframing Japanese Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 240–242. The Japan Proletarian Motion Picture League, or Pro Kino, formed in 1929 to film May Day demonstrations, living conditions in the slums and other material related the Japanese Communist movement, but their focus was on urban workers. See Makino Mamoru, “Rethinking the Emergence of the Proletarian Film League of Japan,” in Mark Nornes Abé and Aaron Gerow, eds, *In Praise of Film Studies: Essays in Honor to Makino Mamoru* (Victoria: Trafford/Kinema Club, 2001), 15–45.
42. *SNH*, vols 49–52 (1932–1935) contain irregular columns and contributions on the activities of the film squads. An article entitled “Eiga senden han tayori,” April 5, 1932 provided much of the information in this paragraph.
43. *ONS*, vol. 2, 249.
44. *Ibid.*, 246–247.
45. *Ibid.* This film was not available for viewing; it is unclear whether copies are still extant.
46. *Jinrui aizen shimbun* (October 1, 1935). *ONS*, vol. 2, 246–247.
47. *SNH* (October 1, 1935). The advertisement appeared as the back cover of three consecutive issues. Advertisements and articles also appeared in the *Jinrui aizen shimbun* and likely in many other Ōmoto publications.
48. Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1968), 242.
49. Statistics gleaned from “Shūkaibetsu kaku undō hōkoku” column appearing in *Shinnyō no hikari* (*SNH*) from May to December 1935.
50. *Ibid.* Statistics were available only for this period, which ends at the point of the second suppression by state authorities in 1935.

51. For additional detail see Inoue Nobutaka, ed., *Shin shūkyō jiten* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1994), 322–327.
52. Morten T. Hojsgaard and Margit Warburg, eds, *Religion and Cyberspace* (London: Routledge, 2005), 4.
53. Ibid., 6.
54. Ibid., 1–5.

Afterword: Questioning Faiths? Casting Doubts

Oscar Salemink

In *Casting Faiths*, Thomas DuBois seeks to understand the transformation of “the definition, practice and social significance of religion” in Asia at three levels—society, theology, and technology—under the impact of the East–West encounter—or what he calls imperial hegemony in his programmatic article “Hegemony, Imperialism and the construction of religion in East and Southeast Asia.”¹ The chapters of this volume shed light on processes of religious transformation via different configurations of society, theology, and technology as brought out in the varying connections of religion with scholarship, with missions and missionizing, with state, nation, and ethnicity, and with commerce and media. This Afterword is not the place to discuss to what extent these wide-ranging individual case studies succeed in linking up the particular with the broad strokes applied by DuBois in his Introduction, which detects a historic paradigmatic change in religion in East and Southeast Asia, and perhaps promises a paradigmatic change in our understanding thereof. Rather, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on some implications from my reading of the chapters within the framework of the “promise” of a paradigmatic change made in the introduction; on questions they raise in my mind about religion in connection with notions of secularism; and on highly provisional and speculative answers to these questions.

To a large extent the subtext for the *Casting Faiths* project, as brought out in DuBois’ Introduction as well as in the various chapters, is formed by a number of interlocking questions: What constitutes religion in the East and Southeast Asian region? Is religion as a separate category in Asia a by-product of the work of Empire—in society, theology, technology—in the encounter of “East” and “West?” Thus, Alexey Kirichenko argues that local concepts of religion and of Buddhism as distinguished from other rival religions emerged in colonial Burma through the work of Burmese monks and intellectuals confronted with the power of British political and religious institutions. Donald Sutton and Xiaofei Kang also discuss the changing Chinese terms for “religion” and societal meaning and uses since the collapse of imperial China, in the context of their discussion of the transformation of a Tibetan pilgrimage site which has acquired

ethno-religious meaning as it has been converted to a cultural heritage site and tourist destination. Unsurprisingly, given the emphasis on the work of Empire, most if not all chapters situate their case studies at the interstices of a colonial encounter, an encounter with imperial institutions or foreign organizations, or at least with particular forms—technologies, media, commercial distribution—that were globalized along with capitalism. In other words, religion was not just transformed but was *formed* as a local, *emic* category in the context of this encounter with Empire, its political, economic and religious projects and its technologies.

If my reading is correct, then the texts imply not the absence of religious practice and meaning in the days before such encounter, but rather its discursive invisibility. Just like many tribal groups living more or less “isolated” lives before their incorporation into a globalizing world referred to themselves in their vernacular language as “the people” which subsequently became their ethnonym, the specific religious practices referred to as *āgama*, *sāsana*, or *dhamma*—as Kirichenko argues for precolonial Burma—could later come to mean “religion” in a more categorical sense. This idea is akin, of course, with Peter Berger’s notion of a *Sacred Canopy* under which all phenomena and practices would be partly attributed to, signified and sacralized with reference to a transcendent supernatural world.² This “sacred canopy” would disappear with the Weberian disenchantment of the world attending the interlinked processes of secularization, rationalization, and bureaucratization.³ Over the last two decades the Weberian notions of rationalization, bureaucratization, disenchantment, and secularization have come under increasingly critical scrutiny from scholars like José Casanova and Charles Taylor. In his magnum opus, *A Secular Age*, the Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor distinguishes three characterizations of secularity. The first defines political practice as free from a religious connection, as a consequence of the separation between church and state in the West. The second characterization of secularity holds that the public space is devoid of reference to religion, as opposed to a situation where all public activity takes place under the sacred canopy. Taylor’s third characterization refers to a consequence of this privatization of religion, namely that religious faith and practice is an option, entertained against a backdrop of competing and contesting discourses.⁴

However, the secularization theories in their varying guises are increasingly contested in academic and public discourse. In the West, the growing social visibility of religious beliefs and practices around the world is often perceived in Eurocentric terms of “de-secularization”, which construes the assertion of religious identities as problematic and prone to violent conflict between communal groups along ethno-religious lines, and hence as a threat to the “secular” public spaces of the state and of civil society. In academia, however, there is growing skepticism of Weberian prophesies that rationalization, secularization, and “disenchantment” are inevitable by-products of modernity, and an awareness that religions continue to play highly public roles in a world that is embracing a plurality of modernities often defined as religious rather than secular.⁵

The *Casting Faiths* project and this volume are about the construction and transformation of religion in Asia. Yet in the preceding paragraphs I have shifted my focus from religion to secularity and secularization because we cannot begin to understand religion as a category—in Asia and elsewhere—unless we grasp the relevant opposite or associated meanings and analyze the historical context in which the concept acquires its meaning. In the introduction to this volume, Thomas DuBois writes that the “discourse [of religion] itself is generally construed in one of two ways, as being modeled either on post-Enlightenment Christianity, or on secular modernism.” For the first, Christianity was upheld as at once the global model of religion, pinnacle of civilization, the missionary road to salvation. DuBois writes that “the academic study of religion (especially the comparative study of ‘world religions’) itself developed out of Christian theological apology, and despite its later pretensions to scientific objectivity, retained racial and cultural trajectories of progress that ranked religions according to their degree of development.” This theme persists throughout the substantive chapters of this volume, four of which deal with Christian missionary practice (Roberta Wollons, Mai-Lin Tjoa-Bonatz, and Jennifer Connolly) or with localized Christian practice (Peter Hansen), while the chapters by Alexey Kirichenko and Judith Snodgrass deal with vernacular attempts to re-cast, re-form and reform local Buddhism in the mirror of what seemed a global Christian hegemony in the nineteenth and early twentieth Centuries.

For the second model DuBois refers to the secularization thesis attributed to Max Weber, and the chapters by Donald Sutton and Xiaofei Kang, by Thomas DuBois, and by Nancy Stalker all deal more directly with this connection between religion and secularity. In their etymological genealogy of the term “religion” in Chinese, Donald Sutton and Xiaofei Kang state that before the late nineteenth century, “[j]ust as the Chinese language had not had a term for religion, neither did it have any equivalent for ‘secular’ (*shisu*), since all classes and teachings assumed the mutual interpenetration of the workings of Heaven and the works of humanity.” Sutton and Kang do not dwell on the term but shift their analysis instead to institutions of secular power, in particular the Republican and Communist state, and the (tourist) market. DuBois and Stalker do not consider religion in contrast with secularism but instead explore how religious organizations use “secular,” commercial technologies—in particular media and marketing tools—with more or less success to forge a religious constituency. In other words, the case studies in this volume explore how religious practices are (re)constituted with recourse to new and demanding theologies and to technologies that might be glossed—rightly or wrongly—as secular, against the backdrop of an expanding imperial hold on the region of East and Southeast Asia.

In the article “Hegemony, Imperialism and the Construction of Religion in East and Southeast Asia,” which dealt with similar themes as his introduction to this volume, Thomas DuBois refers to the work by Talal Asad, who locates the emergence of a discourse of religion at the time when Catholicism, the

hegemonic religion of Renaissance Europe, was challenged by rivaling Protestant Christianities and fought by allied polities and armies on both sides. These religious wars were concluded with the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, which formed the starting point for a discourse of religious freedom, for the separation between church and state, and for the emergent categories of the “religious” and the “secular” underpinning the modern nation-state in Western Europe.⁶ Although these phenomena are increasingly recognized as historically and geographically specific rather than universal phenomena, it would be interesting to look again at the question of religious and secular authority-*cum*-power in Asia with the *Casting Faiths* chapters under our belly.⁷ In *A General Theory of Secularization*, David Martin—who would go on to become one of the main authorities on the global Pentecostal movement—argued that the acceptance of a particular religion often depends on whether it is seen as imposed from outside or whether it functions as mobilizing ideology against foreign repression. Similar claims have been made by Michael Adas in his *Prophets of Rebellion* and for Methodism in Africa by Jean and John Comaroff in their *Of Revelation and Revolution*.⁸ In this volume, the chapter by Jennifer Connolly argues that the conversion to Christianity by the Dayak provides them with a religious mobilizing device for developing their ethnic interests, against a hegemonic state which is both secular and dominated by followers of another faith, Islam.

This brings me to the question of the state in the coeval and mutual constitution of the categories of religion and secularity in Asia. Granting that the history of the Westphalian Treaty is European, it might prove fruitful to speculate about the willy-nilly role of the state in the construction of a space of secularity, but more importantly in the construction and subsequent classification and policing of religious categories. In all the case studies but one in this volume, states—both colonial and postcolonial—loom large as harbingers of political orthodoxy, be it religious or secular.⁹ Alexey Kirichenko discusses the construction and transformation of Burmese Buddhism against the backdrop of a non-Buddhist colonial state which to some extent privileged Christian notions of morality and civilization. Roberta Wollons shows how American women missionaries like Annie Howe built up institutions, practices, and knowledge with respect to kindergartens in Japan, only to find themselves gradually marginalized as aliens. Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz’ discussion of the Protestant conversion of the population of Nias by partial incorporation and partial rejection or destruction of the local ritual representations and objects took place in the colonial setting of the Netherlands East Indies, where the colonial authorities prohibited missionization among the lowland Muslims who constituted the vast majority of the population. A similar situation took shape among the Dayak of East Kalimantan, who embraced Christianity as a dimension of a newly constructed ethnic identity directed against lowland Muslims, according to Jennifer Connolly. Peter Hansen traces the migration and re-construction of Catholic communities in Vietnam—who formed a small and vulnerable religious minority—against the backdrop of political turmoil in that country. Donald

Sutton and Xiaofei Kang look at the pilgrimage site of Huanglong, which attracts both Han Chinese and Tibetans, and its re-casting as a tourist site against the backdrop of strict state surveillance of religious practice. Thomas DuBois speaks of an attempt backed by Japanese overlords to engineer a loyal religious constituency in Manchukuo. Finally, Nancy Stalker discusses the ups and downs of an interbellum religious movement in Japan which made smart use of media technologies.

In all cases mentioned in the paragraph above the main religious actors involved are to some extent heterodox with respect to the states involved. A religious mainstream can become a subaltern population in colonial conditions, while a seemingly hegemonic missionizing religion may be restricted by a (post)colonial state keen to avoid antagonizing the religious sensibilities of the mainstream population under its wings. In strong authoritarian countries like prewar Japan or Communist China the state can be a jealous arbiter of admissible and inadmissible religious practice, thus arrogating to itself the position of orthodoxy *vis-à-vis* both “admissible” and “inadmissible” religions. The point that I wish to highlight here is that in all these cases there is a very uneasy competition between states and religious leaders or followers over legitimate authority—a point that meshes well with the views offered by Keyes, Hardacre, and Kendall.¹⁰ Precisely in such situations of contestation between divergent religions or between divergent religious and political sources of authority the distinction between the categories of the political and the religious comes into sharper relief.

Thus, although the Westphalian Treaty is far removed in time and space from the Asian regions discussed here, I would suggest that David Martin’s observation that an alliance of religious politics with secular politics—and in particular a contestation between religious and political authority—may create the space for a secular discourse, and simultaneously for the emergence of a category and a field dubbed “religion” which may be the object of state policies and of contestation. This is most clearly visible in Communist-ruled countries like China and Vietnam, where the Party-State sacralizes itself in almost eschatological terms and attempts to keep “flourishing religions” under control.¹¹ However, the uneasy connection between the Japanese state and its sacred institutions of Emperor and of the Shintō religion, or the attempt in Indonesia to avoid islamization through the official *Pancasila* ideology speak volumes in this regard as well. For India, Thomas Blom Hansen pointed at the difficult and, indeed, “imperfect” secularization of the Indian state in his “Predicaments of Secularism: Muslim Identities and Politics in Mumbai.”¹²

In the above I suggested that it might be fruitful to locate the emergence of secularity and the concomitant constitution of a category of the religious in situations in which there is contestation between religious and political forms of authority. When investigating this further, it would be wise to take Bryan Turner’s advice not to assume that the binary oppositions of religious/political and sacred/profane are homologous, but rather to look into the connection

between religion and politics in terms of the sacralization of sovereign power.¹³ If my suggestion to locate the emergence of religious and secular discourses in politico-religious divergences glossed in terms of orthodoxy and heterodoxy would hold any validity, I would speculate that this would go a long way in better understanding the difficult and contentious relationship between the religious and the political, and hence better understanding both religious and political phenomena. After *Casting Faiths*, then, it would be apposite to question both these faiths and the labels that they receive. To the extent that the construction of a category of the religious requires a concomitant discourse of secularity, casting faiths would sooner or later imply casting doubts.

Notes

1. Thomas David DuBois, "Hegemony, Imperialism and the Construction of Religion in East and Southeast Asia," *History and Theory, Theme Issue 44*, 4 (2005): 113–131.
2. Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990).
3. Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993). Of course, before Weber other thinkers conceived of social progress, civilization or human evolution in terms of stages. Berger's "sacred canopy" would roughly correspond most famously with Auguste Comte's *état théologique ou féodale*—mankind's "theological stage."
4. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2007).
5. José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Robert Hefner, "Multiple Modernities: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in a Globalizing Age," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27 (1998): 83–104; Peter Van der Veer, ed., *Conversion to Modernities: The globalization of Christianity* (London: Routledge, 1996); Shmuel Eisenstadt, "The Reconstruction of Religious Arenas in the Framework of 'Multiple Modernities,'" *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, 3 (2000): 591–611.
6. Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); see also Bryan S. Turner, "Religion and Politics: Nationalism, Globalisation and Empire," *Asian Journal of Social Sciences* 34, 2 (2006): 209–224.
7. This suggestion owes much to Bryan Turner, "Religion and Politics."
8. David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978); Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements Against the European Colonial Order* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979); John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
9. The exception is Judith Snodgrass' chapter, which deals with the re-formulation and articulation of Japanese Buddhism for a Western academic audience rather than within Japan itself. This does not detract from the argument that I develop below, though.
10. Charles Keyes, Helen Hardacre, and Laurel Kendall, eds, *Asian Visions of Authority: Religion and the Modern States of East and Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

11. Andrew Kipnis, "The Flourishing of Religion in Post-Mao China and the Anthropological Category of Religion," *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 12, 1 (2001): 32–46.
12. Thomas Blom Hansen, "Predicaments of Secularism: Muslim Identities and Politics in Mumbai," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 6, 2 (2000): 255–272.
13. Turner, "Religion and Politics."

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