Orthodox, Heterodox, Heretical:
Defining Doctrinal Boundaries in Meiji-period Sōtō Zen

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This essay describes the process by which Sōtō Zen leaders from the early 1870's through 1890 debated and delimited what now constitutes the institution's doctrinal orthodoxy. A multiplicity of beliefs and practices was reduced to a singular, official statement of Sōtō doctrine in the 1890 text *Shushōgi* (*Meaning of Practice and Verification*). In particular, the practices of *Shaka nenbutsu* and *Amida nenbutsu* were considered heterodox, and the worship of Kannon was declared heretical. The reformulation of Sōtō doctrinal identity found in *Shushōgi* reflects the understanding of its leading intellectuals in 1890 as to what constituted a modern "religion". It reveals a conscious distancing both from traditional ideas and practices deemed overly elitist, as well as from popular practices long associated with Sōtō that risked transgressing contemporary epistemic sensibilities. Instead, we find an ethics-centered Buddhist teaching that navigates deftly between these two poles. These doctrinal determinations may be related to three prevalent epistemic assumptions concerning what constituted a modern "religion" during the late-nineteenth century: the rejection of a monastic-oriented clerical elite; a demand for empirical verifiability; and a demand for historical verifiability. These reigning conceptions affected, consciously and unconsciously, the way in which Sōtō Zen, and perhaps other organizations, envisioned their own positions as "religions".

I Introduction

This essay will address the theme of this special issue from a somewhat oblique angle. Rather than focusing directly upon any Sōtō Zen considerations of what constitutes the general category "religion" and what does not, I will describe the process by which Meiji-period Sōtō leaders decided upon what is "Sōtō" and what is not. In so doing, I then attempt to extrapolate from these decision-making processes the criteria these leaders employed to determine doctrinal orthodoxy. It is my hope that this will contribute to our understanding of the consequences of the late nineteenth-century East Asian encounter with Western conceptions of religion by allowing us to compare the specific data concerning the elements that one religious organization considered essential for its self-definition with that of other contemporary religious groups. It is my sense that such elements were widely shared and that reigning conceptions of "religion" affected, consciously and unconsciously, the way in which Sōtō and other organizations envisioned their own positions as "religions".

When making positive determinations, such as what constitutes orthodoxy, it is usually the case that some sort of negative determinations – a theological *via negativa* – are part of the process. In the case of the Zen traditions, we now know, thanks to a number of important studies by scholars like Ishikawa Rikizan, William Bodiford, Bernard Faure and Duncan Williams, among others, that the various Zen traditions have, historically, included much more than the practice of *zazen*, or sitting-meditation (see especially: Ishikawa 2000, 2002; Bodiford 1993; Faure 1991, 1993, 1996; and Williams 2000, 2005). One commentator suggests the following

reason for this multiplicity of beliefs and practices: "Because Zen orthodoxy rests on the teacher-disciple lineage alone, instead of issues of doctrine and practice, Zen clerics have historically enjoyed great flexibility in adapting a wide variety of activities, from tantric (esoteric) rituals to Pure Land chanting, to their Zen practice" (De Bary et al. 2001: 306f.). What I will describe below is the process whereby this multiplicity of beliefs and practices was reduced to a singular, uniform, and official statement of Sōtō doctrine found in the 1890 text *Shushōgi* (*Meaning of Practice and Verification*).[1] In particular, I will detail how the practices of *Shaka nenbutsu* and *Amida nenbutsu* were considered heterodox, and how the worship of Kannon was declared heretical. I am attempting here to draw a distinction between "heterodoxy" as something merely judged to be an "other" (*heteros*) "opinion" (*doxa*), the abandoning of which is possible through dialogue and persuasion, and "heresy" as something that is actively excluded as being "beyond the pale" when dialogue has broken down.[2] I will then conclude with the above-mentioned extrapolation, in which I relate these doctrinal determinations to reigning late-nineteenth century epistemic assumptions.

II 1870–1872: A Two-tiered Path

In order to demonstrate the marked departure that the *Shushōgi* takes from the Sōtō institution's earlier doctrinal self-representation, it is instructive to look briefly at three doctrinal statements from the early Meiji period submitted between 1870 and 1872 by high-ranking Sōtō officials in response to government queries. These texts represent vestiges of a Tokugawa period doctrinal self-understanding, and I treat them as indices by which to ascertain those doctrinal elements that were the subject of subsequent reformulation. When viewed together, these texts clearly show a two-tiered understanding of the Sōtō religious path: a more difficult and rarefied path geared primarily to monastics; and a lower-tiered path aimed at the lay masses, whose intellectual and spiritual capabilities were deemed not adequate for the subtleties of the most profound Buddhist doctrines and the rigors of religious training. The first two texts, *Sōtō shūmon no taii* (*A Summary of the Sōtō School*) and *Tōka taii* (*A Summary of the Sōtō Lineage*) are found in an 1870 compilation entitled *Shoshū taii*

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[1] For the original see Sōtōshū sensho kankōkai (1982a: 115–122). I am following the translation found in Bielefeldt/Foulk (2001). Discussions of the text may be found in Reader (1985; 1986) and Heine (2003).

[2] In ordinary parlance, "heterodoxy" and "heresy" are of course used as synonyms. I am suggesting a more nuanced employment of the terms to account for situations, as in the Sōtō cases that follow, in which doctrinal deviations or innovations are rejected and dealt with by religious institutions internally without resorting to the exclusion of the proponents of those deviations or innovations. My understanding of heresy as essentially a political designation agrees with Jacques Berlinerblau's (2001) penetrating analysis of this concept and has been enriched by it.

(*A Summary of the Various* [*Buddhist*] *Schools*);[3] and the third, *Shoshū sekkyō yōgi* (*Preaching Essentials of the Various* [*Buddhist*] *Schools*), comes from an 1872 publication of the Daikyōin or Great Teaching Academy.[4]

Perhaps the first Meiji-period representations of Sōtō doctrine are found within the compilation entitled *Shoshū taii*. This edited volume brings together the responses from ten different Buddhist institutions to a request by the Tōkyō Prefectural Office for Shrines and Temples (Tōkyō-fu shajikyoku goyakusho) for information concerning each school's principal teachings as well as its procedures for ordination and clerical advancement. Such information, according to Nakao Takashi, a specialist on Buddhism in this period, was most likely to be used by the government as part of its attempt to restructure Buddhism (Nakao 1980: 424f.). Although the compilation lacks a publication date, the individual responses are dated the sixth month of Meiji 3 (1870). In addition to the official responses from the denominations, there are three individual submissions, reflecting the personal thoughts of their contributors. There is one by Fukuda Gyōkai (1806–1888), one of the foremost Buddhist clerics in the Meiji period, concerning the Jōdoshū; an anonymous contribution summarizing Jōdo Shinshū belief and practice; and one by Hara Tanzan (1819–1892), a leading Meiji period Sōtō priest, outlining the same for Sōtō.[5] I will examine below both the official Sōtō response, *Sōtō shūmon no taii* (*A Summary of the Sōtō [School]*) and Tanzan's contribution, *Tōka taii* (*A Summary of the Sōtō House*).

The responses were composed at the height of the *haibutsu kishaku* campaigns and are clearly shaped to a considerable degree by these threatening events. Pandering to the newly instituted emperor system is conspicuous, and all of the responses insist upon their organization's long-standing historical support for the emperor, as well as present doctrinal grounds for this support. As such, these responses may be seen as attempts to stem the anti-Buddhist tide and to restore a modicum of Buddhist influence at the level of government. Nevertheless, at least in the case of Sōtō, the way its hierarchy represents Sōto's central teachings does reveal the institution's fundamental, and official, doctrinal orientation at the juncture of the late Tokugawa and early Meiji periods.

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[3]   *Sōtō shūmon no taii* is found in Iinkai (1980: 151f.) and *Tōka taii* in the same volume (159f.).

[4]   The Sōtō contribution to the *Shoshū sekkyō yōgi* may be found both in Iinkai (1980: 261) and in Sōtōshū sensho kankōkai (1983: 377f.).

[5]   While the ten institutional responses are addressed to the Tōkyō Prefectural Office for Shrines and Temples, the individual submissions lack an addressee. There is internal evidence, however, that the authors are responding to a specific government request for their views on the above-mentioned matters.

Sōtō shūmon no taii

The Sōtō response, *Sōtō shūmon no taii*, was authorized by the head abbots of Sōsenji, Seishōji, and Sengakuji – the three Sōtō *furegashira*, or liaison temples, in the city of Edo during the Tokugawa period. Such provenance alone accounts for the continuity of its contents with a pre-Meiji portrayal of the Sōtō establishment. The first section of the text deals with the *mune*, or core principles, of Sōtō and reveals crucial elements of Sōtō's doctrinal self-understanding as of 1870.

The opening of this document spells out the ultimate concern of Sōtō via a double contrast: "The Sōtō school does not discuss the meditation and diligence that has been passed down from former Buddhas. Its sole purport is to attain their wisdom and insight" (Iinkai 1980: 151).[6] Actual attainment is stressed over mere discussion, and it is the goal of that attainment, the wisdom and insight of the Buddhas (*hotoke no chiken*), rather than any particular means of achieving it, such as meditation and diligence, that is of sole importance. Such wisdom and insight was transmitted by Śākyamuni to his disciple Mahākāśyapa and is described with the metaphors "the treasury of the true dharma eye, the exquisite mind of nirvana." Such tropes alone, however, do not inform us of the content of such wisdom and insight. A further, eminently traditional trope attributed to Bodhidharma then elaborates upon these phrases and provides such content: "directly pointing to the mind, seeing into one's nature and becoming Buddha" (*jikishi ninshin kenshō jōbutsu*). The percept of the "seeing" is explained as the recognition that the nature of one's mind is "exactly the same" as that of "all the Buddhas". Such a recognition is called "awakening" (*satori*), and it is the "sole purport" of the Sōtō institution to guide all beings to this experience.

This idealized representation of the Zen teachings and tradition has a long-established pedigree and would surprise no one familiar with the subject. A textual reference to the phrase "seeing into one's nature and becoming Buddha" (*kenshō jōbutsu*) may be found as early as the late fifth or early sixth century in a commentary on the *Nirvana Sutra*.[7] The earliest known record of its coupling with the phrase "directly pointing to the mind" (*jikishi ninshin*) is in the ninth century recorded sayings of the Chan master Huangbo Xiyun (d. 850).[8] The widespread recognition of the trope as one of the constitutive elements of the Zen tradition in Japan no doubt also owes much to its inclusion in Gyōnen's (1240–1321) short

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[6] The terms "meditation" (Jap. *zenjō*; Skt. *dhyāna*) and "diligence" (Jap. *shōjin*; Skt. *vīrya*) refer to two of the six *bodhisattva* practices (Jap. *ropparamitsu*; Skt. *ṣaṭ pāramitāḥ*) that lead to awakening. The others are: charity (Jap. *dan*; Skt. *dāna*), maintaining the precepts (Jap. *kai*; Skt. *śīla*), forbearance (Jap. *ninniku*; Skt. *kṣānti*) and wisdom (Jap. *chie*; Skt. *prajñā*).

[7] *Daihatsu nehangyō shūkai* (*T* 37, 1763).

[8] *Denshin hōyō* (*T* 48, 2012). For an English translation of the relevant passage see Blofeld (1958: 65f.).

description of Zen in his well-known compendium of Buddhist teachings, *Hasshū kōyō* (*The Essentials of the Eight Traditions*).[9]

For our purpose of grasping the doctrinal self-understanding and self-representation of Sōtō at this time, the main point is this: The official version presents as its soteriological goal the idealized and highly rarefied accomplishment of "awakening" (*satori*) or "seeing into one's nature and becoming Buddha" (*kenshō jōbutsu*). In the *Sōtō shūmon no taii*, no explicit distinction is drawn between teachings directed towards the clergy and those toward the laity. While the text (*Sōtō shūmon no taii*) does state that the fundamental purpose of the Buddha's (and therefore Sōtō's) teaching is to lead *all* beings to this goal,[10] in actual practice such a pursuit has been almost solely a monastic activity and an infrequent one at that.[11] An oblique reference to the *de facto* two-tiered approach to teaching Buddhism, one for the clergy and one for the laity, may be glimpsed, however, in a reference to how Sōtō's teaching aids in edifying the populace in harmony with the moral teachings embodied in, and radiating from, the virtuous exemplar of the Emperor.[12] This reference reveals simply the implicit assumption *that* another type of teaching exists alongside that of the pursuit of awakening and that it is the Sōtō clergy who deliver such a teaching to their laity.

Tōka taii

Hara Tanzan's response to the same government survey, entitled *Tōka taii* and also dated the sixth month of Meiji 3 (1870), portrays the main principles of Sōtō largely along the same lines as the *Sōtō shūmon no taii*. While Tanzan's account is explicitly labeled as his "private view" (*shian*), and thus cannot be taken as an official doctrinal statement of the Sōtō establishment, his position as a leading Sōtō cleric and prominent Meiji-period intellectual does provide insight into how Sōtō

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[9]   Hirakawa 1980. For an English translation see *The Essentials of the Eight Traditions* (Pruden 1994). For an outstanding introduction to Gyōnen's importance to the Pure Land tradition see Blum (2000).

[10]   The phrase reads: "leading all beings to awakening by disclosing the Buddha-wisdom" (一切衆生ヲシテ 仏ノ智見ニ開示悟入セシメ).

[11]   Both Williams (2005: 2) for the Edo period, and Foulk (1988: 165) for contemporary Japan, comment on the extremely small ratio of Sōtō monasteries where "training" takes place (seventy-two in modern Japan) to the more than twenty-thousand ordinary temples.

[12]   The relevant sentence reads: "[It] implicitly assists the emperor's magnificent virtue in educating the populace and humbly repays our debt of gratitude to the nation" (陰ニ盛大ノ聖化ヲ翼ケ国恩ヲ報答シ奉ル). The key term here is *seika* which refers to the government's attempts from Meiji 3 to edify the populace in the meaning of *kōdō* (imperial way). I follow the *Zengaku daijiten* (641) definition of the term in my interpretation of this passage ("The moral influence of a sage; the educating of the populace by means of the virtuous example of the emperor" [聖人の徳化。天子の徳によって人民を教化するのいう]).

principles were understood by Sōtō intellectuals of the time. Tanzan studied western science and devoted much of his energy to demonstrating its compatibility with Buddhist teachings. In nine years' time (1879) he would be appointed as the first lecturer in Indian philosophy at Tōkyō Imperial University. In addition to their inherent interest, his views concerning the fundamental principles underlying Sōtō are also important because of Tanzan's role as teacher of Ōuchi Seiran (1845–1918), the enormously influential lay Buddhist whose central role in Sōtō doctrinal reformulation will be examined below.

Tanzan's text reads as if it were an explication of, or an elaboration upon, the *Sōtō shūmon no taii*. It is of course possible that he had access to the *Sōtō shūmon no taii* while preparing his response, or, that both he and the abbots of the three temples based their writing upon the same, or similar, texts. The contemporary Sōtō scholar Kawaguchi Kōfū has even postulated that Tanzan himself may have written the *Sōtō shūmon no taii* despite its attribution to the abbots of the three temples mentioned above (Kawaguchi 2002: 84). In any case, Tanzan's text, like the *Sōtō shūmon no taii*, locates the central soteriological aim of Sōtō as leading its followers to the same self-realization as that experienced by Śākyamuni and all the Buddhas. It entails an insight into one's true and original nature, which is thereupon understood as identical with that of the Buddhas. Like the *Sōtō shūmon no taii*, Tanzan uses the terms *satori* and *kenshō* to describe this experience: "This is called 'correct learning, great awakening (*daigo*),'[13] or, again, 'seeing into [one's] nature and becoming Buddha (*kenshō jōbutsu*).'" Tanzan describes the result of such awakening for the individual in clear and tangible terms: "Those who awaken (*satoru*) to this [truth] dwell peacefully in the wonderful joy of their own original nature."

While the difficulty involved in grasping this ultimate vision is alluded to in the *Sōtō shūmon no taii*, Tanzan expands upon the implications of this. In his opening he writes: "This teaching is of great magnitude and scope and is difficult for those of shallow understanding to fathom. Thus, Śākyamuni used various ways to express this, such as the one, two, three, and five vehicles, each geared to his audience and the occasion, and did not have a set and rigid formulation." Difference in human capabilities requires different, appropriately graded teachings. Clever people are able to awaken to their true nature quickly and are able to achieve great things; the "slow-witted" do so through gradual practice and achieve more modest successes. The sublime teaching of Sōtō, Tanzan states, is directed at the former and constitutes a "monastic concern" (*shukke no nōji*). Tanzan thus states unambiguously what is tacitly assumed in the *Sōtō shūmon no taii*, namely, that there are different teachings, practices, and even goals for monastics and lay followers. There is no mention in the text of just what constitutes the lay path. Such absence implies that what Tanzan conceives as being most distinctly Sōtō is its monastic-oriented teachings and practices.

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[13] The second character in the term *daigo* is also read *satori*.

Tanzan's text deviates from the *Sōtō shūmon no taii* both in explicitly affirming the centrality of *zazen* and by discussing the central Sōtō notion of practice-verification or *shushō*, the term from which the title of the *Shushōgi* is derived. As discussed above, the opening lines of the *Sōtō shūmon no taii* distance (Sōtō) Zen from its eponymous practice of *zazen* not to deny the importance of this practice, but in order to emphasize both the soteriological goal ("see into [one's] nature and becoming Buddha") as well as the complex of other elements that comprise the Sōtō approach. Tanzan likewise describes the necessity of complementary factors such as faith and understanding, but the centrality of *sanzen bendō* – practicing *zazen* under the guidance of an authorized master – is clear as he considers it the "foundational practice". It is through medita-tion, and consultation upon one's experiences therein with one's teacher, that one can "clarify in detail" the relationship between practice and verification. Such clarification results in the highest realization.

Whereas the account of Sōtō's ultimate principles given in the *Sōtō shūmon no taii* describes nothing that could be seen as unique to the Sōtō lineage, but rather gives a general account common to all Chan and Zen lineages, here Tanzan isolates one of Dōgen's central teachings – that of practice-realization, where "practice" is understood as *zazen* – as the core of Sōtō's difficult, yet profound teaching. Here is something distinct not only to the Sōtō lineage, but also to its Japanese form. As mentioned, Tanzan was Ōuchi Seiran's teacher, and it is possible that nearly two decades later, when searching for a distinctively Sōtō teaching for the laity, Ōuchi recalled the centrality that *shushō* had had in his teacher's understanding of the Sōtō monastic path.

Shoshū sekkyō yōgi

The third relevant doctrinal statement from this period is the Sōtō contribution to *Shoshū sekkyō yōgi* – a compilation published by the Daikyōin in 1872, its inaugural year. It contains summary accounts of the main teachings (*shūgi*) of the ten schools conceived as encompassing the Buddhist world at this time. The text was intended as a manual for national instructors to aid them in carrying out the Meiji government's plan to "propagate the Imperial Way" (*kōdō senpu*) according to the *sanjō kyōsoku*, or three teaching principles, enacted by the Ministry of Doctrine (Kyōbushō) earlier that year.[14] This compilation is one of the numerous commentaries on these three principles published both by the Daikyōin, as well as by private individuals, in the year spanning 1872–1873.

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[14] For a discussion of these teaching principles, see Ketelaar (1990: 99–114), which includes a translation of these three principles on p. 106 ([1] to comply with the commands to revere the *kami* and love the nation, [2] to illuminate the principle of heaven and the way of man, and [3] to serve the emperor and faithfully obey the will of the court).

The Sōtō entry is entitled simply "Zen School, Sōtō" and is a short document of approximately one page (one and a half *chō*). Its author is unknown. The text exhibits a number of elements characteristic to virtually all such documents of this period: support for an emperor-centered system of rule in which the continuity of the imperial lineage with the ancestral *kami*, or deities, of the nation is stressed and ardor for contributing to the edification of a benighted populace.

Despite such clear catering to the wishes of the government, and its lack of in-depth doctrinal explication, the little that it does say about doctrinal matters is of interest. First of all, the central doctrinal tropes found both in the *Sōtō shūmon no taii* and in Tanzan's *Tōka taii* are once again affirmed: "Zen […] takes as its main principle (*shūshi*) 'directly pointing to the mind, seeing into one's nature and becoming Buddha.'" Secondly, though, such elevated spiritual attainment, and the taste of its subtle joy, are clearly not conceived as something open to all. The fact of inequality in human capabilities is duly noted and the Sōtō approach to those less able is spelled out:

> "In order to guide those dull-witted people of average or below average ability, we teach such things as *kanzen chōaku* (encouraging good and chastising evil) and *inga ōhō* (retribution based on cause and effect). This leads [them] to respect and worship the *kami* and buddhas, humbly serve the Emperor, think fondly about their debt to the nation, live in harmony with the actual conditions of their lives, and [it] spreads the benefits of civilized governance everywhere throughout [the land]."

When the three texts examined above are viewed together, a fairly clear picture of the Sōtō institution's two-tiered understanding of, and approach to, its teachings during this period emerges. In *Sōtō shūmon no taii*, this two-tiered structure is implicit; in *Tōka taii*, the fact *that* there are two distinct paths, one for the clergy and one for the laity, is made explicit, though the content of lay instruction is not discussed; and in the Sōtō entry in *Shoshū sekkyō yōgi*, both *that* a separate teaching for the masses exists and *what* it consists of becomes clear. The more difficult and rarefied path, geared primarily to monastics, was guided by the trope "directly pointing to the mind, seeing into one's nature and becoming Buddha," (*jikishi ninshin kenshō jōbutsu*) and this soteriological aim is approached through the practice of *zazen*, or sitting meditation, culminating in an experience of *satori*, or "awakening". The lower-tiered path was aimed at the lay masses whose intellectual and spiritual capabilities were deemed not adequate for the subtleties of the most profound Buddhist doctrines and the rigors of *zazen*. This path, while not clearly defined, focused on the practice of ethical behavior according to general Buddhist teachings.

III 1875–1887: Groping Toward a Doctrinal Standard

When the government teaching organs, the Great Teaching Academy and the Ministry of Doctrine, were dissolved in 1875 and 1877 respectively, the Buddhist schools were given a modicum of freedom to teach the laity according to their own

doctrines. Such freedom generated a crisis within Sōtō, however, as no systematic approach to teaching the laity existed. The first step towards clarifying their own teachings in a rapidly changing world may be found in Nōnin Hakugen's *Sōtōshū mondai jūsetsu* (*An Explanation of Ten Sōtō Doctrines*) – a text commissioned by the Sōtō hierarchy to serve as a manual to prepare priests for upcoming, government-imposed examinations. While this text generated a dialogue among the Sōtō clergy which marks the beginning of an increased concern for lay proselytization, the superiority of monastic asceticism continued to be assumed. The relationship between the teachings for this "ultimate" path and those for the "relative" path to be followed by the laity was explained by means of the venerable Buddhist principle of "two-truths" (*shinzoku nitai*),[15] and the content of the lay teachings remained general Buddhist ethical principles lacking any distinctly "Sōtō" features. As there was no systematic approach to teaching the laity, it was left to individual priests to decide on the content of their sermons.[16] The result was a predictable lack of uniformity as to what was taught at any two Sōtō temples.

Honzonron: *Delimiting a Singular Object of Worship*

An important element in the debates surrounding the Sōtō search for a systematic approach to teaching the laity was the disagreement as to which Buddha or bodhisattva would serve as the Sōtō *honzon*, or principal focus of ritual practice. I would now like to look at the three most significant and competing approaches to lay education, each of which argued the case for a different *honzon*: Śākyamuni, Amida, and Kannon.

Śākyamuni

The Sōtō Headquarters (Sōtōshū shūmuchō) soon took measures to create a distinctly Sōtō approach to lay proselytization. In 1878 it published the *Sōtō kyōkai kaishū nikka zukyō* (*Daily Chanting Sutras for Sōtō Teaching Assembly Congregations*) designed to standardize ritual at all Sōtō temples. At about this time it

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[15] *Shintai* (Skt. *paramārtha-satya*) refers in Madhyamaka philosophy to the inexpressible, "absolute truth" of *śūnyatā* (Jap. *kū*), or "emptiness"; and *zokutai* (Skt. *Saṃvṛiti-satya*) to the "relative truth" conveyed through ordinary sense-perception and the conventional use of language. It is, however, a fundamental ontological position in the Madhyamaka school that the very distinction between "absolute" and "relative" is itself relative and that in fact the two aspects of truth depend upon each other. For a short discussion of how the logic of *shinzoku nitai* functioned in the Jōdo shinshū discourses of the Tokugawa and early Meiji periods, see Fujii (2001: 110–116).

[16] See *Sōtōshū kyōkai jōrei* (*Regulations for the Teaching Assemblies of the Sōtō School*; 1876), in: Sōtōshū shūmukyoku (1872–1889: Meiji 9, notification no. 26: 87–90).

commissioned Tsuji Kenkō, one of the highest ranking Sōtō clerics to standardize the teachings for the laity. His lengthy manual, *Sōtō kyōkai sekkyō taii narabini shi'nan* (*A Summary of the Sermons of the Sōtō Teaching Assembly Together with Guidelines*), was published in three installments between 1879 and 1881 (Sōtōshū sensho kankōkai 1982a: 17–103). Its main feature is the implementation of the *Shaka nenbutsu*, or recitation of the name of Śākyamuni (*namu Shakamuni Butsu*), as the standard for lay practice. It taught that by reciting the *Shaka nenbutsu*, one is assured of the immediate attainment of Jakkōdo – the Buddha-land of Eternally Tranquil Light. This was clearly a response to the perceived lack of a simple lay teaching and practice, one that would help Sōtō compete for followers with other Buddhist schools and, especially, from the proselytizing efforts of Christian missionaries. This Śākyamuni recitation had many proponents among Sōtō priests, and there is evidence that its practice was fairly widespread. In addition to Tsuji, another influential and high-ranking Sōtō teacher, Sugawa Kōgen put forth a similar teaching in a widely-read tract (Sōtōshū sensho kankōkai 1982b: 1–16). In the end, however, rather than solving the problem as intended, these texts served as the catalyst for passionate debates concerning the ultimate doctrinal identity of Sōtō. Tsuji's advocacy of a simple *nenbutsu* recitation, together with his adoption of Pure Land idiom drew the criticism that this teaching was a cheap imitation of Pure Land practices and had no basis in the Sōtō tradition. Thus, despite Tsuji's manual having been initially authorized for use by the Sōtō Headquarters, this approach was ultimately abandoned.

Amida

At the same time that Tsuji and Sugawa were advocating a *Shaka nenbutsu*, other Sōtō priests sought a more accessible lay teaching through the adoption of practices normally associated with those of the Pure Land schools. This was so widespread that Ikeda Eishun could write that the *Amida Sutra* was the usual scripture used by early Meiji period Sōtō priests when proselytizing, and that they taught the chanting of the *Amida nenbutsu* and the reliance upon Other-power (*tariki*) for rebirth in the Pure Land (Ikeda 1994: 394–395). The two most comprehensive attempts to systematize and implement this Sōtō-Pure Land fusion were by the Sōtō priest and prolific author Yoshioka Shingyō and by the highly influential lay teacher Ōuchi Seiran. Yoshioka left his native Izumo in the late 1870's in order to spread the Buddhist teachings as an itinerant priest among the common people of the Tōhoku area of northeastern Japan. His unique blend of Zen and Pure Land was certainly influenced by his close relationship with Ōuchi. In his remarkable text, the *Tōjō zaike kedōgi* (*Rules for the Education and Guidance of*

the Sōtō Laity), composed between 1884 and 1885,[17] Ōuchi recommends a clear separation of religious paths for priests and laity. For lay followers he advocates the wholesale adoption of a Jōdo shinshū path based on the teachings of Shinran (1173–1263) and Rennyo (1415–1499). Ōuchi argued that while *jiriki*, or practice based on "one's own power", is clearly superior to *tariki*, or practice based on a "power other [than one's own]", the *Amida nenbutsu* is clearly the most profound of all *tariki* practices and should be adopted for teaching the laity.

This might seem extraordinary to a modern proclivity to accept contemporary doctrinal divisions between Buddhist schools as guides to what Sōtō priests actually taught, and to our concomitant proclivity to ignore the fluidity of pansectarian practices before the Meiji period. If this is so, the fact that Ōuchi's recommendations in the *Zaike kedōgi* were actually accepted by the Sōtō authorities (where Tsuji's had been recently rejected) and were printed virtually verbatim in the school's first *Sōtōshū shūsei* (*Sōtō Regulations*) in 1885 will appear all the more surprising. In the introduction to Article Four, entitled "Summary of the Teachings of the Sōtō School" (*Sōtōshū shūkyō taii*), the teachings were divided into two paths – one for priests and one for the laity. The monastic path was based on *jiriki*, and was encapsulated in the phrase "solely through one's own power, one becomes a Buddha in this very body" (*tanjun jiriki, sokushin jōbutsu*). In contrast, the lay path was based on *tariki*, and was described as an "exclusive practice based on a power other (than one's own, leading to) rebirth in a single thought" (*senju tariki ichinen ōjō*). Although these regulations were submitted to, and approved by, the Minister of Internal Affairs (*Naimu Daijin*) in May of 1885, the adoption of "the teachings of Amida" (*midahō*) as the path for the Sōtō laity caused such furor within some segments of the Sōtō priesthood, and drew such derision from other Buddhist groups, that a mere three months after its promulgation, the Sōtō Headquarters was forced to issue a special notification repealing Article Four.[18]

Kannon

Tapping into a deeply-rooted aspect of the Japanese Buddhist tradition, Daidō Chōan (1843–1908) initiated a movement that centered around the salvific power of Kannon. Chōan was a Sōtō priest from Niigata with enormous charisma, whose lifelong objective was the creation of a lay Buddhism. He wrote extensive doctrinal tracts in which he describes his teaching of faith in Kannon as transcending and sublimating the categories of self-power and Other-power in what he termed

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[17] This text was thought lost until the early 1980's when it was discovered embedded in a late Meiji-period treatise. While the text is not dated, it is clear from the issues it treats that it was composed between 1884 and 1885. See Sōtōshū sensho kankōkai (1982a: 105–114).

[18] Both Article Four and the "special notification" repealing it are quoted in Sōtōshū sensho kankōkai (1982b: 322–325).

"subtle power" (*myōriki*). He initiated his Kannon-centered activities among his lay followers in 1875, and during the early years of his campaign it seems that he did not attract any criticism from Sōtō Headquarters. One reason for this must be that a standard for lay proselytizing did not yet exist, and priests were told to teach as they saw fit. His increasing renown, however, coincided with the attempts at standardizing Sōtō teachings described above. In 1886, approximately one year after the rejection of Ōuchi's proposal for an Amida-centered lay path, Sōtō authorities summoned Chōan to Tōkyō to answer to charges of heresy (*ianjin*). When Chōan discovered that his chief examiner would be no other than Ōuchi, a lay Buddhist (*koji*), he considered this an affront to the priesthood and refused to respond to the summons. He was subsequently expelled from the Sōtō organization – an exceedingly rare event. Not deterred from his mission, Chōan took this as the impetus to start an independent religious group, the Guzekyō, which within a few years achieved nationwide status and flourished until Chōan's death in 1908. While Chōan himself lived an austere and celibate life, strictly maintaining the precepts, his Guzekyō did not discriminate between lay and clerical status, nor between male and female members, and achieved a high level of social integration.

Attempts to standardize teachings and practices were part of an overall strategy to modernize the Sōtō institution, and these attempts, in turn, must be seen as instances of the dominant trend toward standardization that permeated Meiji-period society in general. Despite a decade of such attempts, there was no agreement within Sōtō as to what, or how, to teach its lay followers. The tacit, and probably unquestioned, assumption, however, in the cases examined above was that the religious path for priests and that for laity were clearly distinct. The only exception – Chōan's attempt to transcend this two-tiered approach and create a lay Buddhist organization – was rejected as being beyond the pale of Sōtō orthodoxy. There was no question that the essence of Sōtō identity was found in the higher and esoteric priestly path, bound to the "difficult" practice of *zazen* and summed up in the traditional tropes *kenshō jōbutsu* and *jiriki*. While there was general consensus that the content of the lesser and exoteric lay path must be focused around simple Buddhist ethical principles, there was no agreement as to how to portray this as something distinctly *Sōtō*. With the adoption of the *Shushōgi* as the principal embodiment of the School's teachings in 1890, however, this taken-for-granted two-tiered approach to Buddhist practice was unified into *a single path for all Sōtō members, priestly and lay*. I will now examine this "Copernican Revolution"[19] within the Sōtō Zen institution by giving a brief account of the process by which the *Shushōgi* was created, revised, and adopted.

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[19] This phrase is used by Mutai (1991: 20). Most Sōtō intellectuals, regardless of their stance concerning the issues surrounding this shift effected by the *Shushōgi*, recognize it as the seminal moment in the creation of a modern Sōtō identity.

IV From *Tōjō zaike shushōgi* to *Sōtō kyōkai shushōgi*: A Copernican Revolution

As any approach to teaching the laity that appeared to be based on *tariki* was no longer an option, Ōuchi was forced to pursue a different tack in his efforts to establish a lay teaching standard. The result was the *Tōjō zaike shushōgi*, or *Meaning of Practice and Verification for the Sōtō Laity* that he published in 1888. It was intended to be used by members of the Sōtō fushūkai (Association for the Support of Sōtō), a religious association comprised of Sōtō laity and priests that Ōuchi had established the year before. Religious associations such as the Fushūkai, called *kyōkai* and *kessha*, began to be formed in the mid-1870s and played an enormous role in initiating modernizing reforms in the various schools of Japanese Buddhism.[20] The most influential one, the interdenominational Wakeikai, was founded in 1879, again, by the seemingly ubiquitous Ōuchi Seiran. The Wakeikai grew to over 240 chapters stretching from Hokkaidō to Kyūshū and taught a common Buddhism, based on the "Ten Good Precepts" (*jūzenkai*) as interpreted by the Edo-period Shingon cleric and scholar Jiun Onkō [Sonja] (1718–1804) and on the "Four Debts of Gratitude" (*shion*) to one's parents, the emperor, all living beings, and the Three Treasures of Buddhism.[21] *Every* such interdenominational *kessha* followed suit and adopted this precept-centered teaching (Ikeda 1994: 126). We see here a general acceptance among reformers that the lay Buddhist path should focus upon ethical behavior and the taking of precepts. It is no surprise, then, that a decade later, Ōuchi employed a similar approach when creating the *Tōjō zaike shushōgi*.

The Fushūkai grew quickly in membership and influence. In little more than a year it incorporated the more than one hundred existing teaching associations and now had over 1100 chapters and over 6000 teachers. This figure included more than half of all Sōtō priests who held the rank of head priest (*jūshoku*) or higher. As so many Sōtō priests were thus already using the *Tōjō zaike shushōgi*, the Sōtō Headquarters agreed in 1889 to a petition from the Fushūkai assembly to implement this text as the teaching standard for the entire Sōtō institution. It did so, however, with the condition that Ōuchi's text be revised by the head abbots of Sōtō's two head temples Azegami Baisen (1825–1901) of Sōjiji and Takiya Takushū (1836–1897) of Eiheiji. This revisioning took place from about February or March until September 1890, and it was published anew as the *Sōtō kyōkai shushōgi* (*Meaning of Practice and Verification for the Sōtō Teaching Assembly*) in December of that year.

Ōuchi's original version and the revised version naturally have much of the same content. They are both patchwork collections of passages taken from the writings of

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[20] For an explanation of these terms in English see LoBreglio (2005: esp. 43, n. 13).

[21] For more on Jiun see Watt (1989: esp. 200–202).

Dōgen,[22] most of which are found in both texts. The word "patchwork" must be taken seriously for although the texts read as coherent and through-composed documents, this surface integrity belies a remarkable collage of sentences, indeed even phrases, that have been stitched together from chronologically and thematically distinct loci in Dōgen's extensive corpus. Despite being short texts of less than 4000 characters, the *Tōjō zaike shushōgi* is comprised of 91 different passages and the *Sōtō kyōkai shushōgi* of 82. There is no mention of *zazen* in either text, and indeed, even the character "zen" does not appear. The second characteristic that the two texts share is that they are each divided into five sections: an introduction followed by the four general principles which still today comprise the core of orthodox Sōtō doctrinal self-understanding and self-representation as found in Article 5 of the *Sōtō Constitution* (*Sōtōshū shūken*; see Ōtake 1997: 32). These four principles were decided upon by Ōuchi and were left intact in the revision. They present a progressively-structured, ethics-centered religious path that focuses upon the practices of repentance, taking precepts, vowing, and regular expressions of gratitude: i. Repenting and Eliminating Bad *Karma* (*zange metsuzai*); ii. Receiving Precepts and Joining the Ranks (*jukai nyūi*); iii. Making the Vow to Benefit Beings (*hotsugan rishō*); iv. Practicing Buddhism and Repaying Blessings (*gyōji hōon*).

We see in such an ethics-centered path both a clear continuation of the trend initiated by Jiun in the Edo period, mentioned above, that advocated the *tsūbukkyō*, or common Buddhist, ethical teachings of the "Ten Good Precepts" and the "Four Debts of Gratitude" and that was adopted by the *kyōkai* and *kessha* of the 1870s and 1880s.[23] We also see, however, a significant development away from the use of a commonly held Buddhist ethical teaching to one that, in theory at least, is distinctively "Sōtō" based on the fact that all of the *Shushōgi* passages were authored by the Sōtō founder Dōgen. The need for such a particularly "Sōtō" teaching grew out of the perceived threat that other Buddhist lineages, not to mention Christian denominations, posed in the competition for parishioners. Sōtō needed to convince its followers of the distinctive merits of its religious path while at the same time prove its loyalty to the throne and the government's campaign to promote public morality. The *Shushōgi*, grounded both in the teachings of Dōgen and advocating the "repaying of blessings" (*hōon*) may be seen as an astute production that accomplished both these goals. The fourth principle of the *Shushōgi*, "Practicing Buddhism and Repaying Blessings" (*gyōji hōon*), was often invoked in sermons by Sōtō teachers of the time to direct such "repayment" to the state for the "blessings" that it bestowed upon its people.

Despite these similarities between the *Tōjō zaike shushōgi* and the *Sōtō kyōkai shushōgi*, however, there are indeed some crucial differences that illuminate the central issues dividing the Sōtō hierarchy of the time concerning the nature of its

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[22] The *Tōjō zaike shushōgi*, however, does contain a preface written by Ōuchi that was excised in the revision.

[23] For a detailed treatment of the various nuances of the term *tsūbukkyō* see LoBreglio (2005).

identity. How the text was revised thus lends insight into the nature of the revisions. The text was first examined by Azegami Baisen, the abbot of Sōjiji, whose revisions were almost entirely cosmetic: his main contribution was to restore the faithfulness of the text to Dōgen's writings by re-inserting the original *katakana* where Ōuchi had changed it for Chinese characters.[24] Having made these minor changes, he sent the text to Takiya Takushū – the abbot of Eiheiji. Unlike Azegami, Takiya made substantial revisions to the text both in form and in content, two of which we will focus on here.

The first major change is evident in Takiya's new title from *Tōjō zaike shushōgi* (*The Meaning of Practice and Verification for the Sōtō Laity*) to the more inclusive *Sōtō kyōkai shushōgi* (*The Meaning of Practice and Verification for the Sōtō Teaching Assembly*). The significance of this shift from emphasis upon the text as a means for teaching the "laity" to a teaching that lays out the religious path for all members of the Sōtō Teaching Assembly, priestly as well as lay, is better grasped if we recall the first *Sōtō Regulations* drafted and approved in 1885 but never implemented. In that document, the Sōtō teachings were clearly divided into two paths – *jiriki* for monastics and *tariki* for the laity. Ōuchi fully supported, and indeed sponsored, such a division and when, as we saw, his hope for an *Amida nenbutsu tariki* path for the laity was rejected, he sought to create a lay *jiriki* path. He nonetheless still maintained that lay and monastic practices must be different and that his *Shushōgi*, as the title makes clear, was intended only for the laity. He maintained all along that the practice of *zazen* was the ultimate spiritual discipline. However, he likewise maintained that it was beyond the capacity of most lay people to practice or understand.

How then does his *Shushōgi* embody a *jiriki* path? Ōuchi's strategy is revealed in his understanding of the term *shushōgi* – "the meaning of practice and verification". The phrase comes from Dōgen's teaching of *shushō funi*[25] – that practice and verification, that is, the verification of one's inherently awakened nature (*honshō*), are not disjunct. One does not practice in order to awaken, but rather it is because one's nature is inherently awakened to begin with that one is able to engage in practice. Here then is Ōuchi's key move: he reinterprets "practice", which for Dōgen clearly meant *zazen*, to mean the "practice" of taking the precepts. This required one's own effort, and thus qualified as *jiriki*. To invest such a reinterpretation with Dōgen's authority required, of course, some creative bricolage, and it is precisely those passages which disguise the fact that where Dōgen was referring to "practice" he meant *zazen* and not *jukai*, that have troubled,

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[24] *Katakana* is one of two syllabic scripts used in Japanese in conjunction with Chinese characters. Ōuchi felt that using the original *katakana* made Dōgen's writings more difficult to understand, as the meaning of words thus phonetically represented may be open to interpretation, whereas the use of the Chinese characters fixes such meaning precisely.

[25] Dōgen discusses this in the 'Bendōwa' (Discourse on the Practice of the Way or Negotiating the Way) chapter of his *Shōbōgenzō*.

and continue to trouble, some Sōtō clergy (see for example Mutai 1991; Ozaki 1991; and Kagamishima 1965).

Another highly problematic point is that given this new centrality of receiving the precepts, the type of precepts to be received differs significantly from those found in Dōgen's writings. The sixteenth section of the third chapter entitled "Receiving the Precepts and Joining the Ranks" begins as follows: "Those who receive the precepts verify the unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment verified by all the buddhas." While the *Shushōgi* text begins "*jukai suru ga gotoki*," the Shōbōgenzō *Shukke kudoku* passage from which this is drawn reads "*Shukke jukai suru ga gotoki*," the omission of *shukke*, or "monastic", clearly showing that the passage refers to the monastic precepts and not the lay precepts (as advocated in the *Shushōgi*). Takiya, in contrast to Ōuchi, rejected the notion of the Sōtō teaching being two-tiered with one path for monastics and one for the laity. Rather, he unified the central practice of the school, but in a remarkable move, did so by instituting Ōuchi's conception of taking the precepts as *jiriki* not as the standard for lay education (*zaike kedō hyōjun*) for which it was first adopted (in December of 1889), but rather as the official summary of the Sōtō teachings (*shūkyō no taii*; in an announcement sent from both head abbots to all branch temples in December 1890).[26] It seems that it was with this in mind that Takiya deleted the word "laity" from the *Shushōgi*'s title. Herein lies the aforementioned "Copernican Revolution", the momentous significance of which should be clear: In allowing the taking of precepts to be the *jiriki* practice for both lay and monastic, Takiya, in effect, displaced *zazen* as the central pillar and practice of Sōtō self-understanding and representation. He, as well as other subsequent interpreters, have explained this seeming anomaly by invoking the interpretive strategy of *zenkai ichinyo* first employed in Edo-period Sōtō doctrinal discussions, particularly in the writings of Banjin Dōtan (1698–1775). The phrase means literally "*zazen* and the precepts are one and the same" and is based upon a dubious reading of a single passage found in Dōgen's extensive writings.[27] According to the logic of *zenkai ichinyo*, as practicing *zazen* and practicing the precepts are one in essence, *zazen* is indeed present in the *Shushōgi* – "hidden" within the taking of the precepts. This view is the official position of the Sōtō school – found in Article Five of the current *Sōtō Constitution*.[28]

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[26] Quoted in Kobayashi (1991: 10) and Fukui (1959: 2). Kobayashi mistakenly lists the date as 1 December 1889 (Meiji 22) when the correct date is in fact 1 December 1890 (Meiji 23).

[27] Kagamishima (1965: 15) is one of a number of Sōtō priests and intellectuals who have pointed this out.

[28] The passage, found in Ōtake (1997: 32), reads as follows: "Teaching (*kyōgi*). Article Five: The Sōtō school follows the four principles of the *Shushōgi*, and takes as the fundamental tenet of its teaching the practicing of the sublime realization of *zenkai ichinyo* (the equivalence of *zazen* and the precepts) and *shushō funi* (practice and verification are not disjunct)" [教義。第五条。本宗は、修証義の四大綱領に則リ、禅戒一如、修証不二の妙諦を実践することを教義の大綱とする].

The second major revision made by Takiya concerned the *honzon*, or principal symbol, of the school's teachings. The central issue was twofold: first, what was the *honzon* to be; and second, how was its nature to be understood?

As to what it should be, Ōuchi established as *honzon* in his *Shushōgi* the three treasures (*sambō*; Skt., *ratna-traya*) of Buddha, *dharma* and *sangha* (*buppōsō*). This was a conscious rejection of the widespread sentiment that Śākyamuni Buddha should be the Sōtō *honzon* – the position advocated by Tsuji Kenkō discussed above. Takiya, however, was determined to establish Śākyamuni as the school's single object of worship. In a controversial move, he reintroduced the mantra: "Namu Shakamuni Butsu, Namu Shakamuni Butsu, Namu Shakamuni Butsu" as the closing line in his revision of the *Shushōgi* (Sōtōshū sensho kankōkai 1982a: 122).

Ōuchi rejected this for at least three reasons. First, there was no scriptural basis either for worshipping Śākyamuni Buddha or for reciting his name; second, it elevated the lowest of the "three Buddha-bodies" (*sanshin*), the *keshin*, or *nirmana-kaya*, to the position of highest honor; and third, although it unified the teachings of the school around a single focus, it did so by creating a type of *tariki* practice – a *Shaka nenbutsu* – and a cheap imitation of the Pure Land *nenbutsu* at that. Any conception of 'Buddha' that set up a single Buddha as an object of worship was an utter distortion of Dōgen's teaching. For Dōgen, according to Ōuchi, "Buddha" can only mean the "Buddha that one is" (Sōtōshū sensho kankōkai 1982a: 387). If Sōtō was to have a unified teaching (and remember, Ōuchi's personal view was that a two-tiered teaching was best!) the only possible basis for it was an understanding of the precepts as a *jiriki* practice. And, because taking the precepts required first taking refuge in the three treasures, these could, without contradicting the essence of Dōgen's teachings, be accepted as the *honzon*.[29]

Takiya's revisions were not the last word on the matter. His re-insertion of "Namu Shakamuni Butsu" gave rise to a furious debate. His revisions were set in printed type and sent first to a group of eleven leading priests, then to a committee of five members from Sōtō Headquarters, then to five representatives of the branch temples, before being returned to the Headquarters for the final editing.[30] After much serious discussion, Ōuchi's arguments proved persuasive, and Takiya's controversial last paragraph was deleted. Sōtō officials realized that they must, as Ōuchi had insisted, "return" to Sōtō's fundamental doctrinal position of a *jiriki* teaching. In place of Takiya's ending, they inserted the *Shushōgi*'s present ending based on the teaching that "mind itself is Buddha" (*sokushin zebutsu*). Here we see a clear continuity with the ultimate soteriological goal found in the early Meiji-period texts discussed above and reflecting the Edo-period self-understanding and representation of Sōtō. It is here situated, however, at the end of a radically different path of practice.

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[29] For Ōuchi's rejection of Śākyamuni as *honzon* see Sōtōshū sensho kankōkai (1982a: 387).

[30] For a detailed account of all editorial decisions see Okada (1986).

Although Ōuchi's position on the nature of 'Buddha' was accepted, his nomination of the three treasures as Sōtō's *honzon* was not. The final editorial committee settled upon Śākyamuni Buddha as the *honzon*, adopting Takiya's version and in line with Tsuji and Sugawa's position of the late 1870's and early 1880's. Here we see a clear compromise between the positions of Ōuchi and Takiya: Śākyamuni became the principal symbol of the Sōtō institution in so far as he represents the inherent awakening of all.

V Conclusions: From the Mountains to the Streets

The conscious and confident rejection of European influence reflected in Tokugawa foreign policy gradually gave way to the realization that in order to survive as an independent nation, Japan would have to learn numerous lessons from the countries of Europe and from the United States. The British and French defeat of the Qing Dynasty in the Opium Wars, the U.S. demands presented by Commodore Perry in 1853–1854, and the subsequent embarrassments of the unequal treaties of 1854–1858 are key milestones along this path of gradual realization that served as spurs to the active acquisition of knowledge from abroad. Naturally, gaining expertise in such things as military technology, industrial infrastructure, transportation, and civil engineering were top priorities and the respective genealogies of their importation into Japan are not difficult to trace. Japanese leaders were also interested in the role of religious institutions in European and American society, and Japanese observations of such matters have been recorded and studied (see for example Braisted 1976 and Kume 2002). Doing intellectual history, however, and attempting to trace epistemic shifts – in the case of this special issue, shifts in the understanding of "religious" knowledge and behavior – is notoriously more difficult, especially since unlike the case of, say, importing naval technology, religious institutions are in a much more precarious situation when it comes to publicly acknowledging the lessons learned from other religious groups: if one's teachings are true, what need could there be to learn from others? Nevertheless, it is inevitable that in rethinking what "Sōtō" identity meant in a time of rapid social change its leaders were engaged, consciously and unconsciously, in a dialectical "conversation" with reigning notions of what constituted the most modern, and thus "enlightened", forms of "religion". In order to grasp how the changes in Sōtō institutional structure and doctrine described above were related to the less-conscious dimensions of this "conversation", I attempt to extrapolate from the changes themselves three reigning epistemic assumptions that were clearly of concern to Sōtō and other Buddhist leaders using an inductive approach. These were: a rejection of a monastic-oriented clerical elite; a demand for empirical verifiability; and a demand for historical verifiability.

The rejection of a monastic-oriented clerical elite may be seen as a guiding assumption of the Sōtō "Copernican Revolution" described above and has reson-ances with Protestant understandings of the proper relationship between clergy and

lay followers. It must be remembered that in Meiji-period Japan it was Christianity in its Protestant, not Catholic, forms that was widely perceived as the most advanced class of Western religion. The common terms for these, *shinkyō*, or "new teaching", for Protestantism and *kyūkyō*, or "old teaching", for Catholicism are value-laden expressions that reflect the positive assessment of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation among Japanese intellectuals (Thelle 1987: 195–199). The Protestant critique of a celibate Catholic clergy aloof from many of the practical concerns of lay followers, as well as its acceptance of clerical marriage, is likely to have presented a challenge to Buddhist institutions that were attempting to distance themselves from the widely-perceived corruptions associated with their favored status under the Tokugawa regime. In the case of Sōtō, Takiya's unification of the Sōtō priestly and lay paths in the *Sōtō kyōkai shushōgi* is consistent with a Protestant position and could be seen as an attempt to respond to anti-Buddhist voices within Japan as well as to defuse the criticisms of Protestant missionaries.

Sōtō admirers of the *Shushōgi* have referred to the transformation it effected both as a shift "from a Buddhism of the mountains to a Buddhism of the streets" (Nagahisa 1959: 9) and as an "opening of the *dharma* castle."[31] That is, Sōtō leaders were now making accessible to the masses treasures that had heretofore been hidden away and solely the purview of a clerical elite. According to this interpretation, the *Shushōgi* is seen as a symbol of Sōtō's modernization and as an overcoming of the "corruption" – namely, the squirreling away of the school's precious religious teachings – associated with the institution's monastic-oriented past. This ready acknowledgement of, and deep regret for, its own past "corruption" must also be seen, however, as a strategy used by Sōtō leaders to distance the institution both from its policies under the discredited Tokugawa regime as well as from religious ideals that were perceived as no longer socially or economically viable. The distinction between priest and layman was already becoming blurred due to the rapidly increasing number of married priests following the enactment of the *nikujiki saitai* ("eating meat and clerical marriage") law permitting clerical marriage in 1872 (Jaffe 2001). Takiya's *Shushōgi* may thus be viewed as an attempt to craft a religious teaching that reflected this new de facto clerical reality. Also, from the perspective of finances, due to the abolition of the Tokugawa-period *danka seido*, or temple-parishioner system, local residents were no longer legally required to support their temples financially. All Buddhist institutions were now forced to compete for the loyalty of their parishioners, both with other Buddhist lineages, as well as with Christian denominations, and it was Protestant missionary activity that was viewed as the most serious threat. The Sōtō adoption of a Protestant-like rejection of a transcendent priesthood thus dovetailed well with its "penitent sinner" strategy.

The second epistemic assumption, shared widely by both religious and non-religious intellectuals, was a demand for empirical verifiability. Already at the relatively

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[31] *Opening of the Dharma Castle* (*Akeyuku hōjō*) is the title of Sakurai Shūyū's book on the modern history of the Sōtō institution (Sakurai 1967).

early date of 1882, Hara Tanzan, the Sōtō intellectual mentioned above in connection with his text *Tōka taii*, was writing tracts such as *Shinshō jikken roku*, or *A Record of Experiments Concerning the Nature of the Mind*, in which he argues that the Buddhist teachings are compatible with the method of the natural sciences introduced by the West because both are experimentally verifiable (Sōtōshū sensho kankōkai 1982c: 1–20). It should come as no surprise to learn that the "Buddhist teachings" he was referring to were, as in *Tōka taii*, those which describe the workings of the mind and rarefied states of consciousness experienced during the practice of meditation. As such practice was almost exclusively the preserve of the monastic elite, apologias such as Tanzan's did nothing to stem the growing tide of criticism claiming that the more popular Buddhist practices such as prayers for 'this-worldly benefits' (*genze riyaku*) were mere superstitions.[32] Thus, Sōtō and other Buddhist lineages were still faced with the dilemma of somehow countering these claims vis-a-vis their *lay-oriented practices*. In the case of Sōtō we saw that with the implementation of the *Shushōgi* as the official embodiment of its teaching and practice, *zazen* was effectively displaced by *jukai* – the taking of lay precepts. Conceiving this "taking" of precepts as a "practice" effected by one's own power (*jiriki*) afforded this "practice" the same status in terms of empirical verifiability as *zazen* did for thinkers like Hara Tanzan. The soteriological result of taking the precepts, "entering the ranks of the Buddhas" (*nyūi*), is likewise, in (Sōtō) theory at least, empirically verifiable in that it occurs simultaneously with the practice itself – the meaning of the eponymous *shushō*, or "practice and verification [are one and the same]," of the title *Shushōgi*. We see here an extraordinarily clever means of maintaining continuity with the soteriological goal of the monastic-elite paradigm discussed earlier, namely *jōbutsu*, or becoming Buddha. But in this new paradigm, the goal is open not only to Sōtō religious adepts, but to the unlettered laity as well. By taking the precepts, all "become Buddha" here and now. Such an approach both matches the Protestant affirmation of the value of this world and challenges the verifiability of such teachings of Jōdo shinshū, Sōtō's main Buddhist rival, as "other power" (*tariki*) and the existence of a "Pure Land".

This perceived need to vindicate one's teachings in terms of empirical verifiability is clearly related to a third epistemic assumption of the day – a demand for *historical* verifiability. While the cynosure of the storm provoked by the charge that Mahayana Buddhism was not based on the teachings of the historical Śākyamuni[33] was still more than a decade away, there was nevertheless a clear recognition that the highest evolutionary class of "religions", i.e. "world

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[32] Inoue Enryō was perhaps the leading Buddhist voice criticizing the tradition in this vein. See Staggs (1983) and Josephson (2006).

[33] These debates are referred to as *daijō hibutsuron* or *daijō hibussetsu*. Murakami Senshō is perhaps the central protagonist in these debates. A good introduction to his role in these, and to the topic itself, may be found in Sueki (2005).

religions", had, like Christianity with its Jesus, historical founders.[34] Thus, in the case of the Japanese Buddhist lineages, one's relationship to the historical Śākyamuni became ever more important.[35] We have seen above in the debates concerning which Buddha or bodhisattva should be the principal focus of ritual practice (*honzonron*) the exclusion of Amida and Kannon, who had long been included in the array of divinities worshipped by Sōtō followers, both priestly and lay, in favor of Śākyamuni. It is important to recall as well that in Buddhological terms (if one may use this term as a parallel for Christian theological debates concerning "Christology") Śākyamuni was explicitly rejected as a divinity towards whom chanting is appropriate or efficacious. Rather, it was Śākyamuni in his historical capacity as founder, i.e. as a concrete manifestation in this world (Jap. *keshin*; Skt. *nirmāṇa-kāya*), and as a symbol of the inherent awakening of all human beings, that was affirmed as the Sōtō *honzon*.

While it is difficult, and somewhat precarious, to trace direct causal links between particular doctrinal innovations and reigning epistemic notions, I have nevertheless argued that the reformulation of Sōtō doctrinal identity as found in the *Shushōgi* reflects the understanding of its leading intellectuals in 1890 as to what constituted a modern "religion". We see in this text a conscious distancing *both* from traditional ideas and practices (*zazen*, *satori*, etc.) deemed overly elitist, as well as from popular practices (*Shaka* and *Amida nenbutsu*; Kannon worship) long associated with Sōtō that risked transgressing contemporary norms of empirical and historical verifiability. In their stead, we find an ethics-centered Buddhist teaching that navigates deftly between these two poles. While much of the traditional flavor of Sōtō teachings and practices is thereby compromised, it is no coincidence that this new doctrinal position concurs with the reigning epistemic assumptions discussed above. I am not suggesting that this process entailed a simple adoption of Western scientific and Protestant epistemic values; rather, that it reflects the inevitable and subtle dialectic between such epistemic values and the specific economic, political, and social dynamics confronting the Sōtō institution in the first two decades of the Meiji period.

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[34] On the development of the concept "world religion" see Smith (1998: 278–282).

[35] Indeed the debates surrounding the reality of Buddhist divinities only intensified during the following three decades. A particularly outspoken critic of the veracity of all Buddhas and bodhisattvas except for the historical Śākyamuni was the Sōtō priest Takada Dōken who referred to these as "transformation" buddhas and bodhisattvas (*kebutsu* and *kebosatsu*) and rejected them outright as non-existent and deceptions. See LoBreglio (2005: esp. 59–60) for a detailed explication.

Glossary

Akeyuku hōjō 開けゆく法城
Amida nenbutsu tariki 阿弥陀念仏他力
Azegami Baisen 畔上楳仙
Bendōwa 弁道話
buppōsō 仏法僧
chie 智慧
chō 丁
Daidō Chōan 大道長安
daigo 大悟
Daihatsu nehangyō shūkai 大般涅槃
    経集解
daijō hibussetsu 大乗非仏説
daijō hibutsuron 大乗非仏論
Daikyōin 大教院
danka seido 檀家制度
Denshin hōyō 伝心法要
Dōgen 道元
Eiheiji 永平寺
Fukuda Gyōkai 福田行誡
furegashira 触頭
genze riyaku 現世利益
Gyōnen 凝然
Guzekyō 救世教
gyōji hōon 行持報恩
haibutsu kishaku 廃仏毀釈
Hara Tanzan 原坦山
Hasshū kōyō 八宗綱要
honshō 本證
honzonron 本尊論
hotoke no chiken 仏の知見
hotsugan rishō 発願利生
Huangbo Xiyun 黄檗希運
ianjin 異安心
inga ōhō 因果応報
Jakkōdo 寂光土
jikishi ninshin kenshō jōbutsu 直指人
    心見性成仏
jiriki 自力
Jiun Onkō Sonja 慈雲飲光尊
jōbutsu 成仏
Jōdo shinshū 浄土真宗

Jōdoshū 浄土宗
jukai nyūi 受戒入位
jūshoku 住職
jūzenkai 十善戒
kai 戒
kanzen chōaku 勧善懲悪
kebosatsu 化菩薩
kebutsu 化仏
kenshō jōbutsu 見性成仏
keshin 化身
kessha 結社
kōdō senpu 皇道宣布
koji 居士
kū 空
Kyōbushō 教部省
kyōgi 教義
kyōkai 教会
kyūkyō 旧教
midahō 彌陀法
mune 旨
Murakami Senshō 村上専精
myōriki 妙力
Naimu Daijin 内務大臣
namu Shakamuni Butsu 南無釈迦牟
    尼仏
nikujiki saitai 肉食妻帯
ninniku 忍辱
Nōnin Hakugen 能仁柏巌
nyūi 入位
Ōuchi Seiran 大内青巒
Rennyo 蓮如
ropparamitsu 六波羅蜜
sanbō 三宝
sanjō kyōsoku 三条教則
sanshin 三身
sanzen bendō 参禅辨道
satori 悟, *satoru* 悟る
seika 聖化
Seishōji 青松寺
Sengakuji 泉岳寺
senju tariki ichinen ōjō 専修他力一

念往生
Shaka nenbutsu 釈迦念仏
shian 私按
shinkyō 新教
Shinran 親鸞
Shinshō jikken roku 心性実験録
shintai 真諦
shinzoku nitai 真俗二諦
shion 四恩
Shōbōgenzō 正法眼蔵
shōjin 精進
Shoshū sekkyō yōgi 諸宗説教要義
Shoshū taii 諸宗大意
shūgi 宗義
shukke kudoku 出家功徳
shukke no nōji 出家ノ能事
shūkyō no taii 宗教の大意
shūshi 宗旨
shushō 修証
shushō funi 修証不二
Shushōgi 修証義
Sōjiji 総持寺
sokushin zebutsu 即心是仏
Sōsenji 総泉寺
Sōtō Fushūkai 曹洞扶宗会
Sōtō kyōkai kaishū nikka zukyō 曹洞
　　教会会衆日課誦経
Sōtō kyōkai sekkyō taii narabi ni shi'nan 曹洞教会説教大意並指南

Sōtō kyōkai shushōgi 曹洞教会修証義
Sōtō shūmon no taii 曹洞宗門之大意
Sōtōshū kyōkai jōrei 曹洞宗教会条例
Sōtōshū mondai jūsetsu 曹洞宗問題
　　十説
Sōtōshū shūkyō taii 曹洞宗宗教大意
Sōtōshū shūmuchō 曹洞宗宗務庁
Sōtōshū shūsei 曹洞宗宗制
Sugawa Kōgen 栖川興巌
Takiya Takushū 滝谷琢宗
tanjun jiriki, sokushin jōbutsu 単純自
　　力即身成仏
tariki 他力
Tōhoku 東北
Tōjō zaike kedōgi 洞上在家化導儀
Tōjō zaike shushōgi 洞上在家修証義
Tōka taii 洞家大意
Tōkyō-fu shajikyoku goyakusho
　　東京府社寺局御庁
tsūbukkyō 通仏教
Tsuji Kenkō 辻顕高
Wakeikai 和敬会
Yoshioka Shingyō 吉岡信行
zaike kedō hyōjun 在家化導標準
zange metsuzai 懺悔滅罪
zenjō 禅定
zenkai ichinyo 禅戒一如
zokutai 俗諦

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'Religion' and 'Superstition' in Introductory Works to Religious Studies in Early Republican China

Christian Meyer

The concept of "superstition" played an important role in the reception of the discipline of Religious Studies (*zongjiaoxue*) in China. A general background of its introduction was the larger trend to adopt Western categories since the late Qing period. More specifically, public discourses on the role of religion in Republican China (1912–1949) led to the academic occupation with religion. While anti-religious intellectuals subsumed religion under the category of "superstition", apologetics of religion differentiated between the two. The examples of introductory works by the Christian authors Xie Songgao and Wang Zhixin reveal two different ways of introducing and applying categories of "religion" and "superstition" to the Chinese history of religions. Their writings can be understood partly as apologetic reactions to the fierce anti-religious attacks that dominated the debate in the 1920s. At the same time they represent a way of negotiating different biographical backgrounds, traditional Chinese and Christian, in their own identities.

1 Introduction: 'Religion' and 'Superstition' in the History of Modern China

The related concepts of religion and superstition as introduced from the West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century had an eminent and influential place in the history of modern China. Their introduction was related to the general transmission of Western concepts and terms to China, often via Japan,[1] but also especially to the presence and efforts of Christian missionaries in China. Furthermore, connected to these two channels of transmission, reception was very much divided: While the attitude towards the adoption of the concept of religion was positive in some quarters, the anti-religious movement rejected religion(s) – both Christianity and/or indigenous religions – as backward and even generally superstitious and argued that only science promised a bright future, prosperity, and democracy.

While other aspects of this long process have already been described in detail,[2] the main focus of this article shall be on the hitherto rather neglected role of indigenous Christians as writers of some of the earliest introductions to the new academic discipline of Religious Studies (*zongjiaoxue*). As I see it, these Christian writers played an important role in the adoption of and reflection on the concepts of religion and superstition. Their writings can be seen as apologetic reactions to

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[1] On the question of transfer of knowledge and creation of neologisms in other academic fields in China see, for example, Lackner/Amelung/Kurtz (2001), Lackner/Vittinghoff (2004), or Elman (2006).

[2] Most studies, however, have followed the lines of the national or anti-religious discourses. See the introduction to this volume and for China especially the works of Chen (1999), Nedostup (2001), and others.