



Buddhism

INTRODUCING THE BUDDHIST EXPERIENCE

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Japanese Experiences of Buddhism



Buddhism is traditionally said to have been introduced into Japan in 552 by Sōng-myōng, the king of the Korean kingdom of Paekche. However, historians point out that there were colonies of Koreans in Japan prior to that date, and most likely Buddhist priests were among them. In any case, Sōng-myōng did present an image of Gautama Buddha, some ritual items, and *sūtras* to Emperor Kinmei (ruled 531–571) to foster a political alliance against the neighboring Korean kingdoms of Koguryō and Silla. A letter accompanying these gifts said in part:

This teaching is the very best of all doctrines. However, it is difficult to explain and to understand. Neither the Duke of Zhou nor Confucius could comprehend it. This teaching can produce both happiness and rewards of unlimited quantity and boundless measure. It leads to the full appreciation of Awakening. Imagine a person possessing treasures that content his or her heart, and satisfy all wishes as these treasures are used. This is how it is with the treasures of this teaching. Every prayer can be fulfilled, and nothing is left wanting. This teaching has come from distant India to Korea, where all receive it with great reverence as it is preached to them. (*Nihongi*, II, 66)

The emperor consulted his court as to whether he should accept this foreign religion. The Soga clan, descended from Korean immigrants and responsible for foreign affairs, supported the acceptance of Buddhism. However, the Mononobe and Nakatomi clans, responsible for traditional rituals of what would later become known as the Shintō religion, were concerned that the acceptance of Buddhism into Japan would offend the indigenous *kami*, or spirits. This ancient religious tradition of Japan held the belief that there were many types of spirits residing in Japan. Although the people of Japan did not have a formal organized religious system at the time of the arrival of Buddhism, they did have local customs and ritual forms that were used to relate to and influence the spirits. The spirits were seen as coexisting with

people in Japan, especially in the natural environment, so the Japanese people and spirits needed to live in harmony. Bringing foreign deities into Japan and worshiping them could be resented by the spirits and this would break the good relation the people had with the spirits. In the end, the emperor gave the Soga clan permission to adopt Buddhism. The Sogas built a temple to house the Buddha statue and even arranged the ordination of the first Japanese monks and nuns. When a plague broke out, the rival clans charged that the *kami* were in fact angry over this new religion, and they suppressed Buddhism. When this did not affect the plague, Buddhism was again supported.

As the Soga clan eventually dominated the court, Buddhism replaced the indigenous tradition as the state religion within just fifty years. Scholars point out that the acceptance of Buddhism was not so much because of its doctrinal positions or its spiritual practices, but because it was the carrier of an advanced continental civilization. However, most important was the attraction of its rites and ritual formulas, which were perceived to be powerful means for attaining security and prosperity. A major appeal of early Buddhism in Japan was its sacred power expressed in its system of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, temples, rites, and priests that could be called on in times of need.

PRINCE SHŌTOKU

The first Japanese emperor to actually practice Buddhism was Emperor Yōmei (ruled 585–587), who is said to have believed in the teachings of the Buddha while still respecting the way of the national gods. Emperor Yōmei's son, Prince Shōtoku (574–622), is honored by tradition as the founder of Japanese Buddhism. He supported the building of seven temples in Japan. In 593, he built the Shitennō-ji temple in present-day Osaka, which became the center for social welfare activities in Japan. In 607, he also built the Hōryū-ji temple complex at Nara, which housed many fine pieces of Buddhist art and became the center of Buddhist studies. Because many of the temples were built with the guidance of the Korean missionaries, they were crafted in the Paekche style.

In 594, Shotoku issued an imperial decree that urged all people to accept the Three Refuges of Buddhism as the highest refuge for all living beings. In 604, he issued the *Constitution in Seventeen Articles*, a set of rules for government officials based on Buddhist, Confucianist, and Shintō teachings. In Article Two, he again emphasized the importance of accepting the Three Refuges, or Three Treasures:

Give sincere reverence to the Three Treasures. These Three Treasures, the Buddha, Dharma and Monastic Orders, are the final refuge for . . . [all living] beings, and are the highest objects of faith in all countries. Few persons are completely evil; so they can be taught to follow it. But if they do not take up the Three Treasures, how can their crookedness be made straight? (*Nilongi*, II, 128)

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Prince Shōtoku also saw a profound moral and spiritual philosophy in Buddhism. He is celebrated as the author of eight volumes of commentary on various *sūtras*. From the *Lotus Sūtra*, Shōtoku emphasized the idea of One Vehicle, or *Ekayāna*, and the idea that the highest teaching of this vehicle presents the view that all living beings have the innately pure Buddha-nature (*Tathāgata-garbha*), which is none other than the *Dharmakāya*, the Body of the Buddha itself. So Awakening can be attained by laypersons and monastics, men and women alike. On his deathbed, Shōtoku is said to have quoted a passage from the *Dhammapadam* that describes the path to this attainment: "Avoid evil, undertake good, and purify the mind. This is the teaching of the Buddha." Since the time of Prince Shōtoku, this conjunction of moral virtue with the purification of the mind in search for the inner luminosity of one's Buddha-nature has been essential to the Japanese experience of Buddhism.

THE NARA PERIOD (710–784): THE SIX SCHOOLS FROM CHINA

To learn more about Buddhism, Prince Shōtoku initiated diplomatic relations with China and sent official delegations of monastic scholars to China for study. It was because of this initiative that the Six Schools of Japanese Buddhism were founded based on Chinese models. As the pro-Chinese Fujiwara clan replaced the Soga clan as the dominant force in the imperial court, the new Chinese-based Buddhist schools began to grow into an intellectual and political force in Japan. This influence can be seen in the new capital of Japan established in 710 in the present-day city of Nara. The city was modeled on the Chinese capital of Chang'an, and the plan for Nara included Buddhist temples at several strategic places. Emperor Shomu (ruled 724–749) ordered the building of the famous temple, Tōdai-ji (see Figure 9.1), that enshrined a huge statue of Vairocana Buddha, fifty-three feet tall and made of 450 tons of bronze gilded with gold. This "Great Eastern Temple," dedicated in 757, was the centerpiece of the Nara system of Buddhist temples. It became the headquarters of the Kegon (Chinese: Huayan) School, as well as a place associated with other Buddhist schools. In 741, Emperor Shōmu also ordered the construction of two provincial temples (one for monks and one for nuns) in each province. In this positive environment, the Six Nara Schools flourished.

The Kusha School

The Kusha School, based on the Chinese Zhushu School, originated from the Indian Sarvāstivāda School. The Japanese Kusha School takes its name from the *Abhidharmakośa* written by Vasubandhu. The Japanese Kusha School presents a detailed analysis of the elements (*dharma*s) of existence with the aim of helping people eliminate afflictive emotions and clinging attachments that produce obstructions to the attainment of Awakening. By seeing that oneself and the things of the world are products of these dependently arisen elements, one is able to free oneself from defiled states of consciousness (e.g., hate,

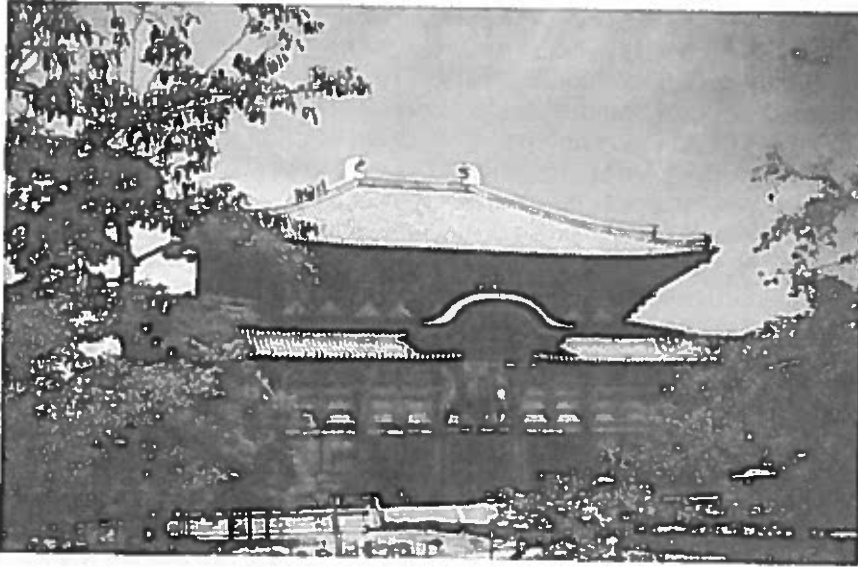


FIGURE 9.1. Tōdai-ji Temple; eighth century C.E., Nara, Japan.

greed, and delusion). By the extinction of such defiled mental and emotional elements, one experiences Awakening and reaches the unconditioned freedom of Nirvana. The Kusha School provided the Japanese Buddhist tradition with categories useful for moral, psychological, and philosophical analysis.

The Jōjitsu School

The Jōjitsu School, based on the Chinese Chengshi School, originated from the Indian Sautrāntika School. It also has certain affinities with Mahāyāna and is named after the *Satyasiddhi (Jōjitsu) Śāstra*. Jōjitsu claims that the Kusha School fails to understand fully the emptiness of the elements it analyzes. Kusha, Jōjitsu says, rightly examines the elements as a way of losing attachment to oneself and the world of things. But one must also discover the emptiness of the elements by experiencing them as impermanent factors in the process of life. However, Jōjitsu also claims that even this experience of emptiness is not enough. One has to transcend the very consciousness of emptiness. Only in this deeper experience of the "completion of truth" (*satyasiddhi*) can the person find the freedom of Nirvana so as to be fully able to live compassionately for others.

The Ritsu School

The third school, the Ritsu School, taught the *Vinaya* (Ritsu) discipline, which would be practiced by other forms of Japanese Buddhism. We saw that in China, there had been a concern that Buddhist monastics were not following

true monastic discipline to support the *Vinaya* it was essential to have for Japanese Buddhists to study the *Vinaya* in China, they first invited *Vinaya* in Japan. Later, known in Japan as Ga Jianzhen settled at Tōc was held at Tōdai-ji, a and 80 monastics of v The experience of the dination constitute a : heart in ways that pro *Vinaya* is thought to be more capable of spirit

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true monastic discipline. To counter this tendency, the Lu School was founded to support the *Vinaya* discipline. Emperor Shōmu of Japan also realized that it was essential to have properly ordained and disciplined monks and nuns for Japanese Buddhism to prosper. So he sent two Buddhist priests to China to study the *Vinaya* and bring it to Japan. During their ten years of study in China, they first invited the *Vinaya* master Daoxuan (702–760) to teach the *Vinaya* in Japan. Later, they also invited the *Vinaya* master Jianzhen (687–763), known in Japan as Ganjin, to formally transmit the *Vinaya* lineage to Japan. Jianzhen settled at Tōdai-ji. Two months later, in 754, an ordination ceremony was held at Tōdai-ji, and Emperor Shōmu, part of his family, 440 laypeople, and 80 monastics of various schools received the formal *Vinaya* ordination. The experience of the Ritsu tradition is that the vows taken at the time of ordination constitute a spiritual and moral force that affects one's mind and heart in ways that produce virtuous actions. Also, the mind purified by the *Vinaya* is thought to be more receptive to the teachings of the Dharma and more capable of spiritual progress.

The Sanron School

The fourth school, the Sanron School, is based on the Chinese Sanlun School, itself a transmission of Mādhyamika from India. The Sanron School was the dominant school of thought in the early Nara period, and it has influenced all of Japanese Buddhism with its teachings concerning emptiness. Its first transmission to Japan came by way of the Korean monk Hyegwan, who also brought the Jōjitsu teachings and was the student of the founder of the Chinese Sanlun School. Other transmissions came later, and the Sanron School eventually divided into subsects based on these different transmissions. Given that its teachings concerning emptiness were similar to Jōjitsu's, the latter school was eventually absorbed into Sanron. Sanron taught that the "higher truth" into the real nature of things comes from a spiritual insight that transcends words and concepts. From this higher intuitive viewpoint, one sees that everything in the world is a product of dependent arising or emptiness. Ordinary awareness hides the higher truth of emptiness with its categorizing and conceptualizing mental functioning. Through the meditative cessation of this rational functioning of consciousness, the supreme truth about life can show itself in enlightened experience.

The Hossō School

The Hossō ("Characteristics of the *Dharmas*") School is based on the Chinese Faxiang School, which originates from the Indian Yogācāra tradition with its focus on the nature and functioning of consciousness. As with the Sanron tradition, there were a number of transmissions of Hossō to Japan from Korea and China. Hossō accepted the Sanron position that all things are empty because they are dependently arisen, but sought to understand the way in which things manifest themselves in this matrix to one's consciousness.



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The chief concern of the Hossō School in Japan was to understand the nature and functioning of consciousness, because it was believed that the mind is the source of both ignorance and liberation. For the Hossō School, Awakening entails a "reversion" of the deepest level of consciousness so that the mind becomes like a "mirror" and can reflect clearly the truth about oneself and the world. The enlightened mind reflects the true nature of existence, the "suchness" (*tathata*) of life. This change in one's consciousness transforms the way one thinks and acts. The major contribution of Hossō to the Japanese Buddhist experience was its analyses of human consciousness, the ways in which ignorance hides the truth, and the transformation of mind by which that truth can be found. This contribution helped to make Hossō the predominant school in the late Nara Period.

The Kegon School

The last of the Six Schools is the Kegon School, which is based on the Chinese Huayan School. Bodhisena, a monk from India, is said to have arrived in Nara around 726, and taught the doctrine of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. Then the Chinese monk Daoxuan, who brought the Lu School to Japan, also brought Huayan texts with him in 736. Korean monks were also influential in introducing Huayan ideas. The Japanese government saw the Huayan teachings concerning the harmonious nonobstructed mutual penetration of all phenomena as a model for a unified Japanese society. The Kegon School, therefore, stressed the Huayan Buddhist teachings about the all-embracing interpenetration of the universe and the inherent Buddha-nature in all living beings. These two Kegon teachings are symbolized by the great Vairocana Buddha. Vairocana's radiant body, represented by the sun, symbolizes the luminous unity of all the elements of the universe. Each part of Vairocana's body, containing his Buddhahood, symbolizes the fact that each element of the universe has the Buddha-nature. Emperor Shōmu, inspired by this symbolism, cast the huge Buddha of Tōdai-ji temple in the image of Vairocana and used it to promote the unity of the Japanese nation.

THE HEIAN PERIOD (794–1185): TENDAI AND SHINGON

At the end of the Nara Period, the Buddhist schools had gained immense economic, political, and social power in Japan. Wealthy clans could donate land to monasteries and still receive income from that land. So monasteries came to represent the interests of rich landowners. Also, the government granted rice land and tax-exempt privileges to each of the regional temples. Tōdai-ji itself housed 4,000 families to cultivate its land and had over 100 slaves. The acquisition of such wealth and power brought corruption and the need for reform. This situation is a partial reason why the government moved the capital from Nara in 794 and established its new capital in the city of Heian, known later as Kyōto. In this way, it hoped to escape the influence of the powerful monasteries in Nara. With the seat of political power in Heian, two

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new Buddhist traditions began to develop near the capital. These are the Tendai and Shingon traditions that produced distinctively Japanese forms of Buddhism, which both drew on and synthesized the ideas and practices of the Nara schools.

Tendai Buddhism

While Tendai is the Japanese version of Chinese Tiantai Buddhism, some major innovations distinguish the Japanese version from its Chinese parent. These innovations are credited to Saichō (767–822), the founder of Tendai. Saichō, born in a village at the foot of Mt. Hiei, left home at the age of fourteen. He received novice ordination at seventeen, and two years later was fully ordained in the city of Nara. After functioning in Nara as a priest, he left the city in 788 to reside in a remote mountain retreat on Mt. Hiei. There, he founded a small monastery and sought to create a more rigorous and purified form of Buddhism. In 794, when the new capital was established in the nearby city of Heian, Saichō met Emperor Kanmu (ruled 781–806). The emperor was impressed with the young monk and his desire to create a new type of Buddhism. Saichō's quest fit with Kanmu's desire for a new form of Buddhism for his new capital. In 798, Saichō presented ten lectures on the *Lotus Sūtra*, which were attended by many scholars from Nara. Given his new fame, Saichō was sent by the emperor to China in 804 to find the best form of Buddhism for the new Japanese capital.

In China, he studied Tiantai at the headquarters of that school on Mt. Tiantai. He also studied Chan, the *Vinaya*, and Tantric forms of Chinese Buddhism. When Saichō returned to Japan, he developed a synthesis of Tiantai doctrine and practice, Chan meditation, Tantric practice and ritualism, Pure Land recitation, and *Vinaya* discipline. Although Saichō stressed the teachings of the Tiantai tradition, the practices of these other traditions were woven into his new school, called Tendai Buddhism (see Figure 9.2). As we shall see, Tendai also provided a religious foundation for the later development of Zen, Pure Land, and Nichiren Buddhism in Japan. Tendai itself became politically involved in Japan as it sought to protect the nation and make it into a "Buddhaland" during what Tendai considered the age of the Degenerate Dharma (*mappō*).

Saichō's Tendai Buddhism stressed the One Vehicle (*Ekayāna*) doctrine of the *Lotus Sūtra* that traditionally had been associated with Prince Shōtoku. Hence, Tendai is referred to as one of the two Heian "One Vehicle Schools," the other being Shingon. Associated with the highest teaching of the One Vehicle is the view that all living beings have the Buddha-nature, and thus partake in the *Dharmakāya*, the Dharma-body or essential enlightened nature of the Buddha. Here is what Saichō says in defense of this emphasis of Tendai in the face of attacks by the older Nara schools:

I am now establishing the discipline of the One Vehicle for the profit and happiness of all living beings. This essay is being written to initiate this universal discipline. I offer prayers to the everlasting Three Refuges, that they may

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extend their invisible and visible protection so that this discipline will be transmitted without obstruction or harm, protecting the nation for all time. [By this discipline] may all living beings leading worldly or spiritual lives overcome what is incorrect, bring an end to what is evil, and protect their "seed of Buddhahood" [*Tathāgata-garbha*]. May all beings awaken to the universal [Buddha]-nature of all things, and obtain spiritual bliss in the land of peaceful light. . . .

The emperor is equal to the sun and moon in Awakening, and his virtue is not different from that of heaven and earth. . . . The Buddha-sun is shining brightly again, and the Way to inner realization is flourishing. Now is the time for the Mahāyāna discipline of the perfect Dharma to be preached and promoted. . . . The *Lotus Sūtra* says, "Choose the straight Way, and set aside other means. Teach the perfect Dharma." It also says, "Now we should practice only the Buddha's wisdom." At present, however, the six [Nara schools] have so much power that they suppress the Buddha's discipline. . . . How can I remain silent? Instead of speaking, I have used here my brush to express just a few of my thoughts. (*Dengyō Daishi zenchū*, 1, 16–17)

To enable people to "awaken to the universal Buddha-nature" and be transformed by it, Saichō taught a comprehensive spiritual journey that synthesized doctrinal and *sūtra* study, meditative discipline, Tantric practice, chanting, and *Vinaya* discipline. On Mt. Hiei, Saichō established two study areas to train his monks for this spiritual journey: One was devoted to study of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and the other was for Tantric studies. Before entering these areas, one had to take the Mahāyāna precepts and make a special vow not to leave Mt. Hiei for twelve years. During those twelve years of seclusion, the discipline of Tendai was rigorous to say the least. The moral, ritual, and *sūtra* training was complemented by a meditation method called *shikan*, meaning "concentration and insight." *Shi* is Japanese for *śamatha*, or tranquillity meditation, and *kan* is Japanese for *vipaśyanā*, or insight meditation. As we have seen, these are the two fundamental forms of Buddhist meditation going back to the original teachings of the historical Buddha.

Four particular types of meditation practice are also used in Tendai to foster the experience of the inner purity of one's Buddha-nature. First is a ninety-day practice during which one does "silent-sitting" meditation in the lotus posture while facing a Buddha image. During that time, one is allowed to chant the name of a single Buddha or bodhisattva to focus the mind. Second is another ninety-day practice that includes "walking" meditation, whereby one circumambulates a statue of Amida Buddha, as Amitābha is called in Japan, and chants repetitions of Amida's name. Third is a thirty-day practice of "half-sitting and half-walking" meditation. At first, one focuses the mind on Tantric images and symbols and chants *mantras* while walking around a Buddha image prior to sitting in meditation. Then one venerates the Buddha, chants passages from the *Lotus Sūtra*, and practices repentance for one's false views about reality. Finally, there is the practice of what is called "non-walking and non-sitting" meditation, which is observed in all of one's daily life. Here, one focuses on *sūtra* chanting and living the *Vinaya* precepts. One reflects on



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FIGURE 9.2. Sanzen-in, Tendai garden and temple; Heian Dynasty (897–1185 C.E.), near Kyōto, Japan.

the image of Kannon (Avalokiteśvara) Bodhisattva, the bodhisattva of compassion, as one flavors all daily activities with compassion.

After Saichō's death, Mt. Hiei became the most important monastic center in Japan, with more than 30,000 monks and more than 3,000 buildings. It also began to emphasize more of the Tantric side of the tradition. Saichō himself did not systematize Tendai's esoteric (*mikkyō*) teachings and practices before his death. However, some of his disciples later traveled to China, where they deepened their Tantric studies and training, and returned to Japan to systematize Tantra in Tendai Buddhism. Two monks were especially important in this regard. First was Ennin (794–864), who led the Tendai School after the death of Saichō. Second was Enchin (814–891), who founded a center for Tantric study. Enchin became an abbot on Mt. Hiei, thus creating two lineages in Tendai—one from himself and the other from Ennin. In 933, a succession dispute broke out between the two groups. This split became more violent over the years. In these disputes, and to protect the wealth of Mt. Hiei, some monks became armed and formed the "warrior monk" tradition in Japan. These warrior monks sometimes descended Mt. Hiei and attacked the Heian capital when they disagreed with certain government policies and decisions.

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Shingon Buddhism

The second One Vehicle School of Heian Buddhism is Shingon, which is based on the Chinese Chenyan School. The name of this school means "True Word" and refers to the *mantras* used in its Tantric practices. Shingon, then, is a Japanese form of Tantric or esoteric Buddhism. Indeed, because Tendai also uses Tantric elements, Heian Buddhism is sometimes referred to as the "esotericization" (*mikkyōka*) of Japanese religion. The founder of Shingon was Kūkai (774–835). Kūkai entered a state university at the age of eighteen and studied the Confucian classics. At the university, he met a Buddhist monk who showed him a scripture with esoteric passages. This inspired Kūkai to leave the university. He took up the life of a wandering ascetic, and during his travels read Buddhist texts. One text was the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* from the mature Tantric tradition. Kūkai was attracted to its promise of sudden Awakening to the inner essence of Buddhahood, but he was not able to understand the esoteric use of *mudras*, *mantras*, and *maṇḍalas* that the text advocated for this attainment. So he decided to travel to China to find a teacher who could teach him this esoteric path. In 803, he became ordained as a Buddhist monk and left for China the next year.

In China, Kūkai received his training from the great Tantric master Huiguo (746–805). Huiguo had received transmission from two Tantric lineages: one based on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, and the other based on the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*. Under Huiguo, Kūkai received initiation into the meditative techniques associated with both Tantric lineages, and then received ordination as a Tantric master. In 806, Kūkai returned to Japan with *maṇḍalas*, scriptures, and Tantric ritual materials. In 809, the emperor ordered Kūkai to serve at Takaosan-ji, the temple that was the center of the Heian Buddhist world. There, Kūkai systematized Tantric doctrines, organized Tantric materials and *sūtras*, and vigorously propagated Tantric Buddhism. In 816, the emperor gave Kūkai permission to build a monastery on Mt. Kōya, some distance from the capital. Until his death in 835, Kūkai was also in charge of Tō-ji, a temple in the capital that was to be a center for Tantric art and practice.

Unlike Saichō, Kūkai succeeded in systematizing Tantric doctrine and practice within the Shingon tradition through his many writings. Among his writings is his famous *Ten Stages of Religious Consciousness* (*Jūjū shinron*). These stages present Kūkai's evaluation of different religions and forms of Buddhism. The following is from a condensed version of the *Ten Stages* entitled *The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*:

1. The animal-like consciousness that is goatish in its desires. The common person in a kind of madness does not see his or her faults. This person thinks only of his or her desires and needs, like a butting goat.
2. The ignorant consciousness that is uncultivated yet abstains from evil. Influenced by various external causes, the consciousness is temperate. The will to be kind grows like a seed in good soil. [Confucianism]

3. The uncultivated for rebirth in a future person is like a child of Taoism]
4. The consciousness of the self. This person is not any permanent
5. The consciousness Mastering the two freed from the see fruit of Nirvana is
6. The Mahāyāna compassion is arc appears. It views and recognizes on world. [The Hossō]
7. The consciousness: negations, foolish truth, emptiness and quiet knows u
8. The consciousness: verse is essentially nomena merge. The cosmic consciousness
9. The consciousness: being; when affect no determined form moves forward [ir
10. The consciousness: Buddha. With the and stains of the cosmos [mantras] can open suddenly displays parent in one's con

The teachings of Shingon virtuous Buddha-consciousness Buddha is the *Dharmakāya*. This Dharma-body is a transcendent and embraces all own innate Buddha-nature verse with Vairocana Buddha to all beings in the universe the universe, preaches and presence and activity as the "constant teaching." The

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3. The uncultivated consciousness that is without fear. The person hopes for rebirth in a heaven, to reside there for awhile peacefully. This person is like a child, like a calf that follows its mother. [Religious Taoism]
4. The consciousness that recognizes the objects of perception, but not the self. This person understands that there are only the *dharmas*, and not any permanent selfhood. [Theravāda Buddhism]
5. The consciousness that is freed from the karmic seeds of causation. Mastering the twelve-linked chain of causation, the consciousness is freed from the seeds of blindness. When rebirth is ended, the ineffable fruit of Nirvana is obtained. [The *pratyekabuddha*]
6. The Mahāyāna consciousness that seeks the salvation of others. When compassion is aroused from within, then the Great Compassion first appears. It views the distinction between self and other as a fiction, and recognizes only consciousness, denying the reality of the external world. [The Hossō School]
7. The consciousness aware of the negation of causality. By the eightfold negations, foolishness comes to an end. With a single thought of the truth, emptiness becomes apparent. The consciousness now empty and quiet knows undeniable peace and happiness. [The Sanron School]
8. The consciousness that follows the true One Vehicle. The whole universe is essentially pure; in this innate purity, knowledge and all phenomena merge. The person who knows this suchness of reality has the cosmic consciousness. [Tendai]
9. The consciousness that completely lacks own-being. Water lacks own-being; when affected by the wind, it becomes waves. The universe has no determined forms; but at the slightest stimulation, it immediately moves forward [into forms]. [The Kegon School]
10. The consciousness filled with the esoteric splendor of the celestial Buddha. With the medicine of the [above] exoteric teachings, the dust and stains of the consciousness are cleared away. Then, the True Words [*mantras*] can open the inner Treasury. When its secret treasures are suddenly displayed, all virtuous qualities [of the Buddha] become apparent in one's consciousness. [Shingon] (*Hizō hōyoku*, I, 420)

The teachings of Shingon are intended to guide people to this tenth stage of virtuous Buddha-consciousness. They do so by stressing that the highest Buddha is the *Dharmakīya*, the essential enlightenment nature of Buddhahood. This Dharma-body is a luminous reality of wisdom and compassion that penetrates and embraces all existence such that the *Dharmakīya* is actually one's own innate Buddha-nature. Kūkai identified this ultimate suchness of the universe with Vairocana Buddha, symbolized by the sun, which radiates its light to all beings in the universe. For Shingon, Vairocana, as the Dharma-body of the universe, preaches and acts continuously throughout the cosmos. Vairocana's presence and activity as the mind, speech, and body of the universe provide a "constant teaching." The purpose of this esoteric teaching is twofold: for

Vairocana's own enjoyment and for the salvation of all living beings. Shingon seeks to experience this teaching through its esoteric methods to realize one's innate Buddha-nature. This direct realization is an esoteric discovery of the very essence of the *Dharmakāya* that Vairocana represents.

Shingon also teaches that the secret and constant teaching of the *Dharmakāya* can actually be communicated to a person through the mysterious words, symbols, and ritual movements of Tantric Buddhism. The *mantras* that one recites bring into awareness Vairocana's speech, the *mudras* that one forms with his or her hands give one a felt sense of Vairocana's body, and the *maṇḍalas* on which one concentrates bring forth Vairocana's states of mind. Thereby, one unlocks the Three Mysteries (*sannitsu*) of Vairocana: his speech, body, and mind in the universe. With the radiance of the *Dharmakāya* shining through Vairocana's Three Mysteries illuminating the body, speech, and mind of the practitioner, one's innate Buddhahood becomes manifest. Shingon believes that by realizing these mysteries in one's own experience, the long journey to Buddhahood, which in the other traditions might take eons to complete, can be attained in just one lifetime and in one's very mind and body.

In its Tantric empowerment, Shingon emphasizes the power of its *mantras* to open the practitioner to the reality of Buddhahood. Indeed, *mantras* are viewed as "empowerment-bodies" of the Buddha. They embody the power of the Dharma, constantly being taught by the *Dharmakāya*, that brings wisdom to the practitioner, and thereby enables him or her to realize the truth of his or her Buddha-nature. In this *mantra* practice, one focuses on the form, the sound, and the inner meaning of the *mantra* that reveal the form, voice, and mind of the Buddha. In this way, *mantras* are said to embody the very essence of the Three Mysteries. This power of the *mantras* is also "sealed" in the practitioner's body by the *mudras*, so that the practice transforms one's body as well as one's mind. Shingon believes that this dual transformation distinguishes it from other forms of Buddhism.

In Shingon, two *maṇḍalas* have a special place in bringing the virtuous and enlightened qualities of the Three Mysteries into one's experience. First is the Womb or Matrix (*taizō*) *Maṇḍala*, based on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. This *maṇḍala* represents an enlightened view of the universe from the viewpoint of compassion, and implies that the energy of compassion enfolds, protects, and nurtures one's Buddha-nature like a womb holding a child. The many deities of this *maṇḍala* represent the activities of compassion; in Tantric experience, they foster this same compassion in the practitioner. This first *maṇḍala*, symbolized by the lotus, represents the compassionate gentleness of the universe evolving from unity to diversity.

The second *maṇḍala* is the Diamond (*kongōkai*) *Maṇḍala*, based on the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*. In this *maṇḍala*, the universe is united in the light of wisdom that merges all beings into one. This wisdom concentrates all the universe into the single light of Vairocana Buddha, who is the luminous source of all the *maṇḍala*'s deities. Penetrating this *maṇḍala* in Tantric experience is said to infuse the practitioner with the light of wisdom, and transforms his or her life into Awakening. This *maṇḍala* balances the gentleness of compassion

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By using these two *mudras*, the Shingon pr (speech, body, and mir speech, body, and mind this union with the Thr in that both the practitio ner attains Awakening ar nature more fully in the person is an action of the practitioner is guided by mit these potent teachin

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By using these two *maṇḍalas* with the esoteric practice of *mantras* and *mudras*, the Shingon practitioner seeks to unite his or her human activities (speech, body, and mind) with the Three Mysteries of the universe—the speech, body, and mind of Vairocana Buddha in all things. The experience of this union with the Three Mysteries brings about a "mutual empowerment" in that both the practitioner and the Buddha are affected. While the practitioner attains Awakening and Buddhahood, Vairocana Buddha actualizes Buddha-nature more fully in the phenomenal world, as every act of the enlightened person is an action of the Three Mysteries. In this transformation process, the practitioner is guided by a Tantric master who alone has the ability to transmit these potent teachings and practices.

Shingon and Tendai both stressed the universal Buddha-nature and the need for moral discipline, study, and practice to realize this true nature of all existence. Both traditions weave together different elements of Buddhist thought and practice to provide more uniquely Japanese forms of Buddhist experience. However, by the end of the Heian Period, their temples held vast land acquisitions, and the tradition of the "maintenance monks" had given rise to the "warrior monks" mentioned earlier. The problem of corruption within Buddhism, coupled with the political chaos and social decay of the times, led many to despair. They concluded that the age of the Degenerate Dharma had overcome them. This conclusion would have an important role to play in the next stage of Buddhism in Japan.

THE KAMAKURA PERIOD (1185–1333): PURE LAND, ZEN, AND NICHIREN

Toward the close of the Heian Period in Japan, the country was divided into estates protected by warriors, and the imperial government was greatly weakened. By 1185, the Minamoto clan defeated its opponents, and its leader, Yoritomo, became the ruling power in Japan. To avoid the corruption found in Kyōto (Heian), Yoritomo established a samurai court in Kamakura far to the east and ruled as the shōgun. The emperor and his court, remaining in Kyōto, never regained any real power in Japan until the nineteenth century. This began the Kamakura Period of Japanese history. It was during this period that three major traditions of Japanese Buddhism were founded: Pure Land, Zen, and Nichiren. All three of the "new" Kamakura forms of Buddhism remain vitally influential today. They were founded by major religious figures who were ordained on Mt. Hiei but found the Tendai tradition to be inadequate. These new types of Japanese Buddhism appealed to the masses, who wanted more simple, independent, and singular forms of Buddhist practice as they faced living in what they considered the age of the Degenerate Dharma. They did not wish to rely on the overly intellectual learning of the Nara schools or on the complex ritualism and combination of practices of the Heian traditions.

Pure Land Buddhism

Mention of the *Larger Land of Bliss Sūtra*, so important in Pure Land Buddhism, was made in writings attributed to Prince Shōtoku. Invoking Amida Buddha was practiced in Nara Buddhism, and also by Tendai during the Heian Period. This invocation chanting practice, called *nembutsu*, was not the exclusive practice for these forms of Buddhism but was considered only one method of concentration. The Tendai abbot Ennin, upon his return from China, established a center on Mt. Hiei where the perpetual chanting of the name of Amida Buddha could occur. From the tenth to the twelfth century, a number of figures began to emphasize such Pure Land piety.

Genshin (942–1017) left Mt. Hiei to devote himself to the practice of *nembutsu* (chanting *Namu Amida Butsu*) and taught that its simple repetition practice was sufficient for rebirth in the Pure Land. Yōkan (1032–1111) stressed the way in which Amida protects his worshipers and also proposed a simple repetition of *nembutsu*. Chingai (1091–1152) founded a branch of Shingon that supported *nembutsu* as a means of reaching the Pure Land after death if it is practiced with sincerity and the desire to save all living beings. Finally, Ryōnin (1071–1132) as a Tendai monk was influenced by the Kegon School's vision of a fully interrelated universe. In that interrelated matrix, each person is united to all humankind in such a way that the action of one person can affect all humanity. Given this matrix, Ryōnin believed, the *nembutsu* of one person can purify the whole of humankind.

These ideas provided inspiration for the founder of the Pure Land (Jōdo) School of Japanese Buddhism, Hōnen (1133–1212). Hōnen's father, a local samurai, was killed by an estate manager in a night raid. Hōnen, who was only nine years old, fled to a nearby Buddhist temple, where he spent three years. At age thirteen, he entered the Tendai monastic complex on Mt. Hiei and was ordained two years later. He then retired to a quiet retreat area on Mt. Hiei, where the Pure Land piety of Genshin was practiced. Here, Hōnen joined a group led by the successor of Ryōnin. Also during this time, Hōnen traveled to nearby Nara, where he studied the philosophy of the Six Schools and practiced *nembutsu* based on the writings of the Chinese Pure Land Patriarch, Shandao. In this Shandao inspired practice of *nembutsu*, greater emphasis was placed on the Other power of Amida, and less on the meditative aspects stressed on Mt. Hiei. Inspired by Shandao, Hōnen is said to have eventually attained a spiritual Awakening and inner peace. This attainment led him to leave Mt. Hiei in 1175 and to move to Ōtani on the outskirts of Kyōto. There he began to propagate his Pure Land ideas to people from all walks of life. His new form of Pure Land Buddhism would become known as a "single-practice" school because *nembutsu* was its exclusive form of practice.

Hōnen believed that *nembutsu* chanting would not only bring one to rebirth in the Pure Land after death, but it could purify past sins in this life as well. Therefore, he felt, *nembutsu* should be chanted often. Hōnen was also considered a great ordination master in the Tendai lineage, and even used Tantric rituals. Despite this, his message of single Pure Land practice met opposition

from Tendai leaders, who in combination with other Buddhist behavior by some of Hōnen's followers. Hōnen returned to Kyōto until 1212, after which he returned to Kyōto until 1218. Shōkōbō (1162–1238) stresses *nembutsu*, is called (1177–1247) founded the intimate relationship between other branches of Jōdo in Japan's religious history.

The teachings of Hōnen's schools. Hōnen emphasizes (shōdō) and the Pure Land reliance on one's own effort requires, on the other hand, Buddha. Hōnen believed in the Degenerate Dharma Amida's Pure Land. This was very attractive to Kaitian of the Pure Land as a path of hisattva journey to Buddhahood on the bodhisattva path of the world as a bodhisattva.

In his advice concerning states of mind discussed one should recite *nembutsu* with deep faith, and (3) a strong faith strengthens these three virtues and directs them toward Amida from worldly experience. Buddha and experience daily in a way that frees thoughts; and false ideas have a true dimension to one's *nembutsu* morally and spiritually from the moment it is begun.

One of Hōnen's writings (*Senchakushū*), is one of the selecting the Pure Land. He also expresses his conviction and healing, urging the "Primal Vow" of Other power.

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from Tendai leaders, who felt that *nembutsu* should only be used in conjunction with other Buddhist practices. In 1206, alleged incidents of improper behavior by some of Hōnen's disciple priests occurred. These priests were beheaded, and Hōnen was exiled for ten months in 1207. He was not allowed to return to Kyōto until 1211, and he died the next year. Among Hōnen's followers, Shōkōbō (1162–1238) is generally regarded as a successor. His sect, which stresses *nembutsu*, is called the Chinzei branch of Jōdo Buddhism. Zennebō (1177–1247) founded the Seizan branch of Jōdo, which stresses *nembutsu* and the intimate relationship between the devotee and Amida Buddha. Although other branches of Jōdo emerged over the years, these two played historic roles in Japan's religious history and are active in Japan today.

The teachings of Hōnen are simple in comparison to the older Japanese schools. Hōnen emphasized Shandao's distinction between the Holy Path (*shōdō*) and the Pure Land (*Jōdo*). The journey on the former path requires reliance on one's own effort, or "self power" (*jiriki*). Reaching the Pure Land requires, on the other hand, a reliance on the "Other power" (*tariki*) of Amida Buddha. Hōnen believed that given the condition of humankind in the age of the Degenerate Dharma, the only real hope for humanity is to be born in Amida's Pure Land. This simple and clear message of hope for all people was very attractive to Kamakura Japan. Also attractive was the whole notion of the Pure Land as a place of joy, purity, and peaceful growth in the bodhisattva journey to Buddhahood. Hōnen taught that with further attainments on the bodhisattva path in the Pure Land, one could again be born in this world as a bodhisattva working for the salvation of others.

In his advice concerning *nembutsu* practice, Hōnen emphasized the three states of mind discussed by Shandao. Hōnen interpreted these to mean that one should recite *nembutsu* with (1) a sincere and devoted mind, (2) a mind of deep faith, and (3) a strong aspiration to attain the Pure Land. *Nembutsu* strengthens these three mental qualities (sincerity, faith, and aspiration) and directs them toward Amida Buddha. For Hōnen, *nembutsu* turns one's mind from worldly experience, evils, and cares to an undivided attention to Amida Buddha and experience of his light, purity, and grace. *Nembutsu* is practiced daily in a way that frees the mind from doubts; disturbing, evil, or idle thoughts; and false ideas. It engenders a growth in virtue and adds a spiritual dimension to one's work, family life, and recreation. In this way, *nembutsu* morally and spiritually enriches the person's ordinary daily experience from the moment it is begun to the moment of death.

One of Hōnen's writings, his *Passages on Selection [of the Original Vow]* (*Senchakushū*), is one of the classics of Japanese Buddhism. In it, he argues for selecting the Pure Land over the Holy Path of the other schools of Buddhism. He also expresses his compassion for the many people who sought his solace and healing, urging them to practice *nembutsu* with simple faith in the "Primal Vow" of Other power:

The way of categorizing the Dharma of the Buddha differs among the various schools and sects. The [Hossō/Yogācāra] School divides . . . according to existence,

emptiness and the Middle Way. The [Sanron/Mādhyamika] School divides the holy Dharma . . . into two scriptures: that of the bodhisattvas and that of the *śrāvakas*. The Kegon School categorizes the five teachings. . . . The [Tendai] School categorizes the four teachings and the five flavors. . . . The Shingon School categorizes the two teachings . . . the exoteric and esoteric.

Regarding [the categories of] the Pure Land School . . . relying on Master Dūochuo we set up the two gates that encompass the whole [Dharma]: the Gate of the Holy Path and the Gate of the Pure Land. . . . The Gate of the Holy Path is divided into two parts: the Mahāyāna and the Theravāda. The Mahāyāna is subdivided into the exoteric and esoteric. . . . The Theravāda . . . is a way of realizing the truth by negating delusions and desires. . . . On the other hand, we find the Gate to birth into the Pure Land. . . . Even though persons may have studied the Gate of the Holy Path, if one wills to learn the Gate of the Pure Land, he or she should leave the Holy Path and take refuge in the Pure Land. Examples of persons who did so are Tanluan . . . and Dūochuo. . . . If these wise scholars of the past did so, then why should we fools in the age of the Degenerate Dharma fail to follow their example?

If the Primal Vow required people to build statues of the Buddha and *stūpas*, the poor and destitute would not have any hope of birth [in the Pure Land]. . . . If the Primal Vow required people to attain wisdom and learning, the unintelligent and foolish would not have any hope of birth. . . . If the Primal Vow required people to follow the precepts and monastic rules, those who have broken them or those who have not taken them would not have any hope of birth. . . . For this reason, Amida Buddha, when in the distant past he was Dharmākara . . . moved by compassion for all and wishing to save all universally, did not choose these many practices . . . in his Primal Vow for birth; but instead chose the single practice of reciting *nembutsu*. . . . "They will be like broken tiles and pebbles that are turned into gold."

If you wish to quickly escape *samsāra*, between the two superior methods, set aside the Holy Path and choose to enter the Gate of the Pure Land. . . . The practice that correctly fixes one's birth [in the Pure Land] is to recite the name of Amida Buddha. This is so because of Amida's Primal Vow. . . . *Nembutsu* practice is likened to the moon's reflection in the water, freely rising up and down. (*Senchakushū*, 1, 3, 16)

The most famous disciple of Hōnen was Shinran (1173–1263), who founded another type of Pure Land Buddhism named Jōdo Shinshū, the "True Pure Land School," or, more simply, Shin Buddhism. As a result of a change in the political fortunes of his family, Shinran entered the monastery when he was just nine years old. He went to live and study on Mt. Hiei, where he practiced "perpetual *nembutsu*" according to the Tendai tradition until the age of twenty-nine. During those twenty years of practice and discipline, he was not satisfied with his Tendai life and did not attain what he was seeking. Eventually, his concern over the possibility of his Awakening was so intense that Shinran decided to make a rigorous 100-day meditation retreat in nearby Kyōto. He hoped to receive inspiration for the future of his spiritual journey. The temple where he carried out his retreat enshrined Kannon Bodhisattva. On the ninety-fifth day of the retreat, Shinran had a dream about Kannon. We do not know the whole content of the dream, but it seemed that Kannon

promised to come to his dream led Shinran to leave the community in Kyōto.

Expressing the deep life, Shinran was certainly embraced by even the most evil of sinners. Shinran always maintaining of Hōnen's teaching Hōnen's followers led to Kyōto of Hōnen and so were sent to different places.

Shinran's exile also occurred at the time that Shinran married, the helpmate for Shinran's children, and Shinran's disciples. There are also his wives. In any case, Shinran's worldly life of the laity. "monk." Shinran was part to the town of Inada. The Pure Land Buddhism to culture. He ministered to the developing his spirit. 1224, Shinran completed (ment), his major religious where he spent the final

It seems that one of the his understanding of True he had shortly after moving practice of *nembutsu* and of all living beings. After could not save other beings Amida. That is, Shinran's basis of one's own will, relying on self-striving, one's "ing." Such practice and a selfish desire. True Pure that all attempts to practice efforts are futile. With this faith as given by Amida's E ssertion of ego to gain Am Amida's gift of faith.

This view of faith and Buddha's admonishment step in the Buddhist journey

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promised to come to him in a feminine form to be his helpmate. Also, the dream led Shinran to leave Mt. Hiei in 1201 and to join Hōnen’s Pure Land community in Kyōto.

Expressing the deep awareness of his own inadequacies in the spiritual life, Shinran was consoled when Hōnen personally assured him that he was certainly embraced by the compassion of Amida Buddha; Amida cares for even the most evil of sinners. Shinran became Hōnen’s favorite disciple; and Shinran always maintained that he was merely transmitting the real meaning of Hōnen’s teachings. However, in 1207 certain indiscretions by some of Hōnen’s followers led to the disbanding of his community and the exile from Kyōto of Hōnen and some of his followers. This included Shinran. Both men were sent to different places, and they never saw each other again.

Shinran’s exile also entailed his being laicized. It was perhaps during this time that Shinran married Eshin-ni. Many speculate that Eshin-ni was, in fact, the helpmate for Shinran foretold in his dream of Kannon. They had six children, and Shinran’s decision to marry became the pattern for Jōdo Shinshū clergy. There are also theories about the names and number of Shinran’s wives. In any case, Shinran did not wish by being laicized to pursue the worldly life of the laity. So he considered himself to be “neither layman nor monk.” Shinran was pardoned in 1211 and moved with his wife and children to the town of Ināda. There, he spent twenty years propagating his form of Pure Land Buddhism to the common people far from the cities of power and culture. He ministered to their needs with sympathy and compassion, quietly developing his spiritual thought and his community of followers. In 1224, Shinran completed the *Kyōgyōshinshō* (*Teaching, Practice, Faith, Attainment*), his major religious writing. Around 1234, Shinran returned to Kyōto, where he spent the final twenty-eight years of his life.

It seems that one of the most formative events in Shinran’s life that shaped his understanding of True Pure Land Buddhism was a religious experience he had shortly after moving to Ināda. He had already embraced the single-practice of *nembutsu* and decided to chant a *śāstra* 1,000 times for the benefit of all living beings. After a few days of chanting, Shinran realized that he could not save other beings, that faith in Amida Buddha is itself a gift from Amida. That is, Shinran understood that doing any religious practice on the basis of one’s own will, one’s “self power,” only strengthens one’s ego. Relying on self-striving, one has the sense that “I am faithful,” and “I am chanting.” Such practice and any results it may bring are poisoned with ego and selfish desire. True Pure Land Buddhism must be based on the realization that all attempts to progress in the spiritual life through one’s own efforts are futile. With this realization, one can then experience the gift of true faith as given by Amida Buddha. Thereby, one’s *nembutsu* is no longer an assertion of ego to gain Amida’s grace but is an expression of thankfulness for Amida’s gift of faith.

This view of faith being a matter of grace does not deny the historical Buddha’s admonishment to rely on oneself and one’s own efforts. The first step in the Buddhist journey is the choice to enter the Buddhist tradition and

take up its practice. However, for Shinran, while this step is essential to begin the journey, attaining the goal is quite another matter. As one advances based on one's own choice and efforts, one begins to realize that the ego is hiding behind all of one's spiritual endeavors. This insight leads to a sense of helplessness, which, according to Shinran, can bring one to surrender to the pure grace of Amida Buddha. This is a very important point. For such a surrender of faith not to be just another act of the will, it must "arise" also due to Amida's grace. So Shinran refers to true faith as *shinjin*, which really means the "arising of faith" from the grace of Amida Buddha. Shinran here is turning the tables on traditional Buddhism, in which faith is preliminary to practice. In Shinran's view, practice is preliminary to faith in the power of Amida's Primal Vow. Indeed, in these ideas, we can see a mirroring of Shinran's own religious life experience.

In this experience of Amida's grace, the True Pure Land devotee realizes what are called the Two Types of Deep Faith. First, one understands the fact that one's human limitations and spiritual defilements entail that one's own "calculated efforts" in the spiritual life are only hopeless attempts. Second, one realizes that the Great Action of Amida Buddha can save one from this condition. In fact, Shinran says that the deeper one's awareness of one's hopelessness and evilness, the greater one's assurance of Amida's compassionate action:

People often say, "If an evil person can attain birth in the Pure Land, it goes without saying that a good person can." While this saying seems right at first, it is counter to the intent of the Primal Vow, or Other power. This is because those who rely on doing good based on self power, do not entrust themselves fully to Other power. . . . But if they overturn this self-power mentality and entrust themselves to Other power, they will attain birth in the true and real land of fulfillment. [They need to understand that] it is impossible for us, who are moved by blind desires, to free ourselves from *samsāra* through any type of practice. [They also need to realize that] Amida, out of pity for us in this condition, made his Vow with the intent of bringing us evil persons to Buddhahood. Therefore, the evil persons entrusting themselves to Other power are precisely the ones who truly possess the cause of birth in the Pure Land. So, such a person says, "If a good person can attain birth in the Pure Land, it goes without saying that the evil person can." (*Tannishō*, 3)

Shinran believed that the three states of mind discussed by Shandao and Hōnen—sincerity, faith, and aspiration—are the qualities of the mind of Amida Buddha. They are not qualities that people can cultivate by *nembutsu* practice based on their own willpower. Rather, Shinran taught, Amida attained these qualities through eons of practice as a bodhisattva, and now transfers them to his devotees. As Amida's mind of "sincerity," or enlightened consciousness, "arises" in the minds of the devotees, this sincerity informs their own minds and hearts. When this quality of Amida's mind forms one's mind and heart, "faith" is graced by the Other power of Amida. Amida thus is present and active in one's life, and one experiences the "aspiration"

to be born in the Pure Land. *nembutsu* practice is no of Amida.

Finally, Shinran exp terms "action, faith and power mind and the effects of Amida's grace. I the arising of faith (*shin* the Two Types of Deep Other power. Faith the (*shō*) to the presence an of freedom and humility presence in the devotee Amida Buddha itself tl One is enabled to live i passionate qualities of /

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Finally, Shinran expresses his ideas concerning Other power with the terms "action, faith and witness" (*gyō-shin-shō*). The overturning of the self-power mind and the entrusting faith to Other power are themselves products of Amida's grace. It is the action (*gyō*) of Amida Buddha that precipitates the arising of faith (*shin*) in the devotee's mind. Amida enables one to realize the Two Types of Deep Faith: one's pitiful condition and the availability of Other power. Faith then transforms one's life in a way that gives witness (*shō*) to the presence and action of Amida Buddha. This living witness is one of freedom and humility, virtue and joy that arises spontaneously from Amida's presence in the devotee's life. In other words, it is the very enlightened life of Amida Buddha itself that makes one able to live its enlightened qualities. One is enabled to live in a way that reflects into daily life the wise and compassionate qualities of Amida and his Pure Land.

So for Shinran, Pure Land Buddhism is not just about being born in the Pure Land. It is about being transformed in this life as well. On the other hand, this life may bear fruit here, but it will also need to be completed in the Pure Land. Then one can return from the Pure Land to help others here find their deliverance. For Shinran, it is this bodhisattva life that is the essence of human fulfillment brought about by Amida's grace. The following passages reflect Shinran's views concerning the human condition, the grace of Other power, and of the growth in virtue:

Although I take refuge in the True Pure Land Way,
 It is difficult to have a true and sincere mind.
 The self is false and insincere,
 I completely lack a pure mind.

Each of us, in our outward appearance,
 Makes a show of being wise, good, and devout.
 But our greed, anger, perversity and deceit are so great,
 We are full of all types of hatred and cunning.

It is extremely difficult to destroy our evil nature,
 The mind is like a snake or scorpion.
 So, the good deeds we perform are poisoned,
 They are called false and useless practice.

Since I lack even a little love or compassion,
 I cannot even hope to help living beings.
 If it were not for the ship of Amida's Vow,
 How could I get across the ocean of this painful existence?

(*Shōzōmatsu wanshū*, 94-96, 98)

"Being saved by the inconceivable working of Amida's Vow, I shall certainly be born in the Pure Land!" The very moment that you entrust yourself to the Vow in this way, with the thought of saying *nembutsu* arising within you, immediately you receive a share in the benefits of being always embraced by Amida. You should know that Amida's Primal Vow does not distinguish between young and old, good and evil. Only the arising of faith is essential; for it is the Vow to save persons with deep karmic evil and serious blind desires. So, for persons entrusting themselves to this Primal Vow, good acts are not required because no good action surpasses *nembutsu*. And, one should never despair about their evil deeds, for no evil acts can obstruct the work of Amida's Primal Vow.

Box 9.1

A Child's Caring

One evening as I returned home from work totally exhausted from a demanding day, I slumped down flat on my back on the living room couch. Lying comfortably, almost asleep, I felt a tug on my left sleeve and a murmuring voice calling, "Daddy, Daddy." It was my two-year-old son, Nathan.

I said to myself, "Oh no, it's Nathan. He wants to wrestle with me again. I am in no shape mentally or physically to wrestle with him. Doesn't he see how tired I am? I guess not, and explaining to him won't help." So I pretended to be asleep.

But my son continued to tug at my sleeve with an undaunted, "Daddy, Daddy!" I became more irritated and began conjuring up all kinds of ill thoughts about my two-year-old, saying to myself, "All he thinks about is himself. Doesn't he understand I'm sleeping? His stubbornness must come from my wife's side!" But he kept tugging, "Daddy, Daddy." Finally, totally frustrated, I opened my eyes ready to scold him.

Lo and behold . . . there he stood holding a blanket in his left hand to cover me. He had dragged it from my bedroom all by himself. And neither his mother nor I had ever taught him to do this. This was completely on his own!

This scene has been deeply etched in my memory. I still recall with shame and embarrassment the selfish thought that I had harbored about my two-year-old son. At the same time, I could not but be amazed by my son's caring act, despite my self-centered thoughts. This event is another concrete, everyday example of the myriad compassionate acts and boundless life forces, seen and mostly unseen, that is symbolized as Amida Buddha in my Shin Buddhist tradition.

In response, I utter quietly or in silence *Namu Amida Butsu* ("Amida Buddha and I are one") in amazement and in gratitude for the realization that I am fine, just as I am, in life and in death!

KENNETH KENSHIN TANAKA
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Musashino Joshi University, Tokyo

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anyone "my disciple" b
Nembutsu is not a pract
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I myself do not have even one disciple. If I made people recite *nembutsu* by my own efforts, then they would be my disciples. But it is wrong to call anyone "my disciple" because they receive *nembutsu* by the working of Amida. . . . *Nembutsu* is not a practice or a good act by its practitioners. Since it is not recited from one's own intentions, it is not a practice. Since it is not something performed from one's own calculations, it is not a good act. For the practitioner, it is not a practice or a good act because it wholly arises from Other power, free from any self power. (*Tannishō*, 1, 6, 8)

The universal Vow, so difficult to understand, is a great ship that carries us across the ocean that is hard to cross. The unobstructed light is the sun of wisdom that disperses the darkness of our ignorance. . . . We know that the auspicious Name that embodies . . . supreme virtues is the real wisdom which transforms our evil into virtue, and that the difficult to accept and diamond-like arising of faith is true reality; it sweeps away doubts and brings one to the attainment of Awakening. . . . The great practice is saying the Name of the Buddha of Unobstructed Light. This practice . . . that possesses the roots of all virtues is the perfect and quick way of bringing them to fullness. It is the Treasure Ocean of Virtues that is suchness, true reality. This is the reason it is called the great practice. (*Kyōgyōshinshō*, I, Preface; II, 1)

Shinran did not designate a successor, and his disciples led sizable communities of followers. His daughter, Kakushin-ri, established a mausoleum shrine where all followers could come to pay respects and where the caretaker of the shrine was to be a member of Shinran's family. This led to a hereditary line of successors. Her grandson, Kakunyo, eventually came to believe that many of the more powerful communities of Shinran's tradition would evolve into independent sects. So he sought to unify them all under the leadership of the shrine, which came to be referred to as *Hongan-ji*, meaning "Temple of the Original Vow." While different branches did emerge due to the powerful military rulers, the *Hongan-ji* became the unifying center for propagating Jōdo Shinshū.

Zen Buddhism

Zen Buddhism was most likely present in Japan as early as the time of Prince Shōtoku in the seventh century. During that century, Dōshō, the founder of the Hossō School of Yogācāra in Japan, also brought Zen practice from China. He built the first meditation hall in a temple in Nara. Saichō, the founder of Tendai in Japan, also met with a Chan master when in China, and made meditation an important element of Tendai practice. However, none of these early initiatives produced a single-practice school of Zen in Japan as existed in China and Korea. It was not until the Kamakura Period that an independent Zen School took root in Japanese soil.

Late in the twelfth century, a Japanese priest named Dainichi Nōnin founded the Sambo-ji Temple in Settsu Provence, where he started teaching Zen. He called his community the Japanese Bodhidharma (Daruma) School of Zen. Nōnin was not trained in Zen but studied Zen texts and practiced

meditation on his own and eventually had an Awakening experience. Because he had not received teaching or permission to teach from an authorized Zen master, Nōnin was a controversial figure. So in 1189, he sent two disciples to China, where they obtained authorization for him from the Chan master, Zhuoan Deguang (1121–1203). He then gained a number of followers. However, after his death, the Daruma sect of Zen did not survive, and his disciples joined the Sōtō Zen sect founded later by Dōgen.

The person whom tradition recognizes as the real founder of Zen Buddhism in Japan is Eisai (1141–1215). At the age of eleven, Eisai entered a temple to study Buddhism under a priest who followed the Tantric tradition. Two years later, Eisai went to Mt. Hiei and was ordained in 1154. At Mt. Hiei, he studied Tendai teachings, including esoteric doctrines, and focused on the Tendai practice of meditation. At the age of twenty-eight, Eisai traveled to China for six months, where he observed the popularity of Chan. Upon his return to Mt. Hiei, he decided to do Zen practice as taught by Tendai. He pursued this path, along with Tantric practice, for the next twenty years. On a second visit to China that began in 1187, Eisai practiced in the Linji School of Chan Buddhism. His master also taught him the *Vinaya* tradition, which Eisai would later make the foundation of Zen monastic life in Japan. Eisai finally received the formal approval (*inka*) to teach Zen, and upon returning to Japan in 1191, he built Shōfuku-ji, the first Zen temple in Japan.

Eisai met strong opposition from the Tendai School because they saw in his teachings the possibility for a personal, single-practice form of Buddhism that would challenge their more complex, ritual-based tradition. In 1199, Eisai traveled to Kamakura, where he gained the support of the shogun. With this support, he established a temple, the Jufuku-ji, in Kamakura. Under Eisai's guidance, Jufuku-ji was at first a center for Tantric rituals but later became one of the great centers for Zen practice. In 1202, Eisai was given some land in Kyōto, where he founded another temple, the Kennin-ji, in which Tendai and esoteric practices were taught alongside Zen. Because of the resistance of the powerful Tendai School, Eisai was careful to present Zen only in the wider context of the older more accepted Tendai tradition. Therefore, while Eisai is considered the founder of the Rinzai (Chinese: Linji) School of Zen Buddhism in Japan, he was primarily a Tendai priest who tried to reform that tradition. Eisai was also respected for his purity and simplicity, in accord with the Zen style of life, and for his personal kindness and generosity.

The following passages are taken from Eisai's *Propagation of Zen in Defense of the Country*, written in 1198 in an attempt to gain support for Zen in Japan in the face of Tendai resistance:

The Mind is great. The height of heaven is immeasurable, but the Mind extends itself beyond heaven. The depth of the earth is also immeasurable, but the Mind extends itself below the earth. One cannot outdistance the light of the sun and moon, but the Mind does so. . . . Because of the Mind, heaven covers while the earth produces. Because of the Mind, the sun and moon move, the seasons pass one after the other, and all things come to be. The Mind is indeed great!

We necessarily call it the truth of innate wisdom, the truth of innate wisdom, the greatest of [Mahākāśyapa], saying it. Therefore, with the slight bloom. From this single flower

Just as in India, this temple. Like the Buddha, it person. . . . This vision of the School of Zen . . . has an essential key to all forms the realization of Awakening doctrine; internally, it this School is all about.

However, there are the dark Awakening." Others do not consider it suitable what our country needs from place to place, and finally, some who have a Zen to be far beyond the Dharma, these persons Dharma. They condemn only blocking the Gate of the, [Saichō] of Mt. Hiei ron, Preface)

Eisai's foundation of the Chan masters and the Tendai and Shingon elements of Zen tradition in Japan. The gunate and the imperial non-Zen practices from founded by Eisai and by school. One of the greatest who studied in China a major practice of the temple Tōfuku-ji, a broad Zen movement.

Another early Rinzai founded the great Kōkoku (1213–1278), known in Japan in 1252. Daiō Kokushi (128 the Myōshin-ji in 1337. The most influential Rinzai temples, any mixture of Zen meditation (*zazen*) in These temples became temples throughout Japan. Today, I

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We necessarily call it Mind, but it has many other names: the highest principle, the truth of innate wisdom, the one reality, the perfect Awakening. . . . Gautama Buddha, the greatest of teachers, transmitted the truth of this Mind to [Mahākāśyapa], saying it is a special transmission outside the scriptures. . . . Therefore, with the slightest turning of a flower, a thousand trees broke into bloom. From this single fountainhead, ten-thousand rivers of truth flowed.

Just as in India, this teaching in China has attracted many followers and disciples. Like the Buddha, it propagates the truth . . . transmitting it from person to person. . . . This vision of the Dharma soon appeared in Korea . . . and the Oxhead School of Zen . . . has made its way to Japan. By studying it, one discovers the essential key to all forms of Buddhism. By practicing it, one's life is fulfilled in the realization of Awakening. In terms of externals, Zen stresses discipline over doctrine; internally, it brings one the highest inner wisdom. This is what the Zen School is all about.

However, there are those who attack this teaching, saying that it is "the Zen of dark Awakening." Others question it saying that it is "utter nihilism." Still others do not consider it suitable for the age of the Degenerate Dharma, saying it is not what our country needs now. Or they express their contempt for our traveling from place to place, and the supposed lack of documented support for our ideas. Finally, some who have a low opinion of their ability to follow our way, consider Zen to be far beyond their power of attainment. In their attempt to uphold the Dharma, these persons are actually suppressing the very treasures of the Dharma. They condemn us without knowing what we are doing. They are not only blocking the Gate of Zen, but they are ruining the work of our great forefather, [Saichō] of Mt. Hiei. What a pity! How sad and distressing! (*Kōzen gokoku ron*, Preface)

Eisai's foundation of Rinzai Zen was later advanced by certain Chinese Chan masters and Japanese disciples in ways that purified the school of Tendai and Shingon elements and produced the great single-practice Rinzai Zen tradition in Japan. This process was aided by the fact that both the shogunate and the imperial court patronized Zen monks. The purification of non-Zen practices from Rinzai happened in the monasteries that were founded by Eisai and by the later Chinese and Japanese developers of his school. One of the greatest of these developers was Enni Ben'en (1202–1280), who studied in China and founded Tōfuku-ji in Kyōto. There, Zen was the major practice of the temple, and all other practices took a back seat. From Tōfuku-ji, a broad Zen movement grew to include more than fifty temples.

Another early Rinzai figure was Muhon Kakushin (1207–1298), who founded the great Kōkoku-ji temple. The Chinese Chan Master Lanxi Daolong (1213–1278), known in Japan as Rankei Dōryū, founded the Kenchō-ji Temple in 1252. Daiō Kokushi (1282–1338) built the famous Daitoku-ji in 1324, as well as the Myōshūn-ji in 1337. Kian Soen (1269–1313) established what became the most influential Rinzai temple in Japan, Nanzen-ji. In each of these monastic temples, any mixture of Zen with other forms of Buddhism was avoided, and Zen meditation (*zazen*) was practiced with a strict program of *kōan* study. These temples became the core of more than 300 official Rinzai temples throughout Japan. Today, Rinzai remains famous for its strict monastic discipline

and its use of *kōans* in meditation practice to foster the sudden experience of Awakening (*satori*).

The second great Zen innovator of the Kamakura Period was Dōgen (1200–1253), the founder of the Sōtō School of Zen Buddhism. Dōgen's father died when Dōgen was only two years old, and his mother died when he was seven. These difficult early circumstances had a strong effect on the sensitive Dōgen. It is said that while in grief over the death of his mother, Dōgen saw the incense ascending from a Buddhist temple and felt the desire to find Awakening. So, at the age of thirteen, Dōgen went to Mt. Hiei and was ordained a year later. At Mt. Hiei, Dōgen confronted a serious religious paradox in the form of an existential question: If all living beings have an innate Buddha-nature, why does one feel the longing for Awakening and have to engage in spiritual practice? Dōgen did not find a satisfying answer to this quandary on Mt. Hiei, and he left to pursue his spiritual journey elsewhere. First, he went to a disciple of Hōnen, who felt that Dōgen's quest could not be satisfied with Pure Land teachings. So Dōgen was sent to Eisai, because the latter was teaching a strict method of Rinzai Zen that could produce a sudden Awakening in which Dōgen's question might find its answer. At Kennin-ji, Dōgen was trained in Zen by Eisai's disciple, Myōzen (1185–1225).

In 1223, Myōzen took Dōgen with him to China. After trying Linji (Rinzai) and other forms of Chan practice, Dōgen studied under Rujing (1163–1268). Rujing was a master in the Caodong (Japanese: Sōtō) School of Chan, which stressed the pure practice of meditation rather than *kōan* practice. One evening when the monks were sitting in night meditation, Rujing noticed that a monk had fallen asleep. He said, according to Dōgen, "In Zen, body and mind are cast off. Why do you sleep?" Hearing this, Dōgen gained Awakening. After staying for two more years to perfect his understanding, Dōgen returned home to Japan.

Upon his arrival in Japan, Dōgen returned to Kennin-ji, but he was dissatisfied with the mixture of Zen practice and esoteric rituals. So in 1230, he moved to the south of Kyōto, where he founded a meditation center, the Kōshō Hōrin-ji. There, strict Zen meditation practice and observance of the precepts were taught, and Dōgen began to write his greatest work, the *Shōbōgenzō* (*The Essence of the Buddha's True Dharma*). However, because of pressure from the monks on Mt. Hiei, Dōgen retreated to a remote place deep in the mountains of Echizen. He lived in small rural temples until he settled in Eihei-ji, the temple that became known as the headquarters of the Sōtō Zen School. Dōgen lived out his last years teaching the single practice of *zazen* and completing the *Shōbōgenzō*.

While Dōgen recognized the usefulness of *kōan* practice, he emphasized the single practice of "just sitting" (*shikan-taza*). This emphasis reflected the answer to his existential question: Why does one practice meditation if one is originally enlightened? For Dōgen, the answer to that question is found in the experience that all things and actions, including sitting practice, are manifestations of original Buddha-nature. In this regard, practice and attainment are identical. Thus, when one practices sitting meditation, one is manifesting

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the Kamakura Period was Dōgen's Pure Land Buddhism. Dōgen's father died when he was young, and his mother died when he was young, which had a strong effect on the sensitive Dōgen. After the death of his mother, Dōgen saw and felt the desire to find a teacher. He went to Mt. Hiei and was ordained as a serious religious practitioner. Dōgen believes that all beings have an innate Buddha-nature and have to realize it through practice. He was not satisfied with the ritual journey elsewhere. Dōgen's quest could not be satisfied as sent to Eisai, because Eisai's teachings could not produce a light that could find its answer. At the age of 21, he went to Mt. Myōzen (1185–1225). After trying Linji (Rinzai) Buddhism under Rujing (1163–1268). Dōgen joined the School of Chan, which emphasizes *kōan* practice. One evening, Rujing noticed that a student had gained Awakening. Dōgen's understanding, Dōgen

was not satisfied with the rituals. So in 1230, he founded a meditation center, the Sōtō Zen practice and observance of the precepts. This is his greatest work, the Sōtō Zen (1247). However, because of his desire to go to a remote place deep in the mountains, he settled in the quarters of the Sōtō Zen practice of *zazen*.

In his practice, he emphasized the importance of sitting meditation. The question is found in sitting practice, are mantras and attainment of enlightenment, one is manifesting

one's Buddha-nature. To realize this fact is to be aware that practice is attainment: One's practice manifests innate Awakening. Dōgen explains this in *A Lecture on Studying the Way*:

Grass, trees and the land, which this teaching embraces, together radiate a great light. They endlessly teach the inconceivable and perfect Dharma. . . . This being true, one person's *zazen* at just one moment imperceptibly fits in with all things, fully radiating through all time. . . . Each moment of *zazen* is itself equally the wholeness of practice and Awakening. It is like a hammer striking emptiness: both before and after, its wonderful sound permeates everywhere. . . . Things all manifest the original practice from the original face [Awakening], impossible to measure.

It is heretical to think that practice and Awakening are not one. In the Dharma of the Buddha, practice and Awakening are the same. Practice is done in Awakening in this very moment. So, the beginner's practice on the Way is itself the whole of original Awakening. Therefore, when we give instructions for practice, we teach that Awakening cannot be found outside practice, since practice itself is the immediate original Awakening. (*Bendōwa*, 6)

Dōgen felt that just sitting is the best means for nourishing the gradual awareness of this original condition of enlightened Buddha-nature. In just sitting, one gradually sees that one's present condition, no matter what that condition might entail, is already manifesting Buddha-nature. To make this point, Dōgen used the example of a fish swimming in the water without realizing the water is there. Similarly, people are already manifesting their Buddha-nature in each daily activity, like a fish swimming in water, even if they are not aware of that primordial fact. Just sitting quietly in meditation enables one to see what is presently the case, one's originally enlightened Buddha-nature reflected in the present moment. As a fish just swims, one just sits until he or she gradually realizes that this sitting practice is a manifestation of Buddha-nature. Therefore, Sōtō is called the "gradual" school of Zen, whereas Rinzai with its intense form of *kōan* practice is called the "sudden" school of Zen.

Further reflecting on his experience, Dōgen claimed, "All beings are Buddha-nature." This statement is different from the more traditional claim that all living beings have Buddha-nature. In the traditional sense, all sentient beings have a Buddha-nature like a Buddha statue covered by a dirty rag. For Dōgen, there are two problems with this traditional statement. First is the distinction or duality between living and nonliving beings. For Dōgen, all states of existence, be they mind or body, mental or physical realities, are manifestations of the one Buddha-nature. Second is the distinction or duality between one's Buddha-nature and one's ordinary mind/body that "has" that original nature within it. The rag/statue analogy implies that there is some eternal and pure spiritual status hidden within, yet separate from, one's transitory and suffering condition. In Dōgen's experience, the search for such a hidden spiritual essence is a misguided example of dualistic thinking. This is because all transient forms of existence are, for Dōgen, Buddha-nature.

All the present forms of life, from mountains and trees to the ordinary states of one's own mind, are manifestations, or self-determinations, of Buddha-nature. To experience this nondualistic fact of true existence is to realize, according to Dōgen, the Buddha-nature that just is all beings.

The following passages from Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* convey his experience of Awakening. They were placed in the first chapter, suggesting that they are something like his statement of Awakening:

When all things are [experienced through] Buddha Dharma, there is delusion and Awakening, practice, birth and death, Buddhas and living beings. When the myriad things are [experienced] without self, there is no delusion, no Awakening, no Buddhas, no living beings, no birth and death. Since the Buddha's Way is itself, from the beginning, beyond fullness and lack, there are birth and death, delusion and Awakening, living beings and Buddhas. Though this is so, flowers fall when we are attached to them, and weeds grow when we dislike them.

To bring yourself to the myriad things in order to authenticate them is delusion. For the myriad things to come forward to authenticate yourself is Awakening. . . .

To study the Buddha's Way is to study oneself. To study oneself is to forget oneself. To forget oneself is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is the dropping away of one's mind and body, and the mind and body of others. No trace of Awakening remains, and this no-trace leaves traces endlessly.

When you first seek for the Dharma, you imagine that you are outside its boundaries. But when you see that the Dharma is already conveyed correctly within yourself, immediately you are your original self.

Awakening is like the moon reflected in water. The moon does not get wet, nor is the water broken. Though its light is vast and great, it is reflected in a tiny bit of water. The whole moon and the sky are reflected in dewdrops on the grass, or in just a drop of water. Awakening does not obstruct people, just as the moon does not break the water. A person does not obstruct Awakening, just as the drop of water does not obstruct the moon. The depth of the water is equal to the height of the moon. However long or short is the duration of the reflection, one realizes in the vastness or smallness of the water, the breadth and brightness of the moonlight in the sky. (*Shōbōgenzō, Genjō Kōan*)

After Dōgen's death, Sōtō Zen grew into a mass lay movement that eventually became the largest Zen sect in Japan. This evolution was due primarily to the Fourth Patriarch of Sōtō, Keizan Jōkin (1268–1325). Keizan modified Dōgen's austere Zen style, simplified Sōtō doctrine, and incorporated elements from Shintō and Shingon that were popular with the common and rural people of Japan. Keizan was also concerned with the problems of the common people. His Sōtō priests became involved in social issues and popular projects such as irrigation systems and medical treatment. There was an effort by the Sōtō priests to educate the people as well as rendering them spiritual, ritual, and social services. Some time later, priests of Keizan's tradition took up residence at Eihei-ji and made it the headquarters of the unified national Sōtō School that is today the second largest Buddhist organization in Japan.

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Nichiren Buddhism

The third great tradition that began in the Kamakura Period is Nichiren Buddhism, named after its founder, Nichiren (1222–1282). Nichiren was born in a small fishing village associated with the famous Shintō shrine of Ise, far from the cities of political and religious power. Given that the Ise shrine was connected to the imperial family, Nichiren began at an early age to wonder why the emperor had recently suffered disgrace at the hands of an uprising. If the Shintō gods were protecting the emperor, why did this happen to him? Also, by this time Nichiren had observed the many Buddhist sects and wondered which one was the true form of Buddhism. Nichiren carried these two religious questions when he entered the nearby temple of the Tendai School, Kiyosumi-dera, to study Buddhism at the age of eleven.

At Kiyosumi-dera, Nichiren learned the basic Tendai teachings based on the *Lotus Sūtra* and prayed to Amida Buddha and other esoteric deities. But as his faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* grew, Nichiren abandoned his Pure Land piety. At the time Nichiren was studying at Kiyosumi-dera, the temple belonged to an esoteric branch of Tendai. There is a history of “title exegesis” in Tendai whereby one finds the doctrinal essence of the text in the title of a *sūtra* itself. Tendai also divides the *Lotus Sūtra* into two halves. The first half is seen as stressing the teachings of Gautama Buddha, and the second half is seen as more clearly revealing Gautama’s eternal nature. Esoteric Tendai stresses this idea of the Eternal Buddha in the second part of the *sūtra*. Also, in esoteric Tendai, *mantras* are used to enable one to realize his or her innate Buddhahood, and *mandalas* assist one in refining his or her states of mind. In his mature thought concerning the Eternal Buddha and the *Lotus Sūtra*, Nichiren would utilize all of these ideas and practices from the Tendai tradition.

After four years at Kiyosumi-dera, Nichiren was ordained. Two years later, he traveled to Kamakura to further his study. Most likely, he focused on Zen and Pure Land Buddhism. However, he became uncomfortable with the contradictory claims of the schools and with the fact that many *sūtras* were being proclaimed. Eventually, Nichiren decided that the *Lotus Sūtra* taught the truest form of Buddhism, and so rejected Zen and Pure Land. Given his Tendai roots, and the fact that Tendai stresses the *Lotus Sūtra*, Nichiren decided at the age of twenty-one to go to Mt. Hiei. At Mt. Hiei, Nichiren concluded that Pure Land, Zen, Shingon, and the older Nara schools were all inferior to Tendai and that Tendai was the only sect that fully represented “true” Buddhism.

Nichiren became convinced that because the *Lotus Sūtra* was the most perfect presentation of the Dharma, it was the best hope for liberation in the age of the Degenerate Dharma. But more than this, he believed that if people gained liberation, their physical and social life would be so affected that the area in which those people lived would be transformed into a place of peace and prosperity. Reaching this conclusion, Nichiren was able to answer the two questions that led him to take up the religious life. He reasoned that the emperor had been abandoned by the gods because Japan had failed to

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honor the *Lotus Sūtra*, having instead embraced the lesser doctrines of the other Buddhist schools. Therefore, he felt that it was urgent that the *Lotus Sūtra* be preached to bring people to liberation and to bring peace and prosperity to Japan. With this new conviction, Nichiren left Mt. Hiei at the age of thirty-two to preach his views back at Kiyosumi-dera. However, his ideas irritated Pure Land followers in the region, and within a year's time Nichiren was forced to flee to Kamakura.

In Kamakura, Nichiren taught that he was preaching Tendai doctrine. However, he became more and more convinced that only the *Lotus Sūtra* could offer people true Buddhism, and the Japanese nation peace and prosperity. He concluded that the other schools of Buddhism should not be allowed to exist, and he developed a method of preaching called "confrontational conversion" (*shinkubuku*). This method utilized shocking attacks on the other schools of Buddhism. For example, he preached that Zen Buddhists are devils and that Pure Land followers would not reach the heavenly Pure Land after death, but would fall into hells.

To understand Nichiren's radical approach, it is important to note that when he arrived in Kamakura, a number of calamities began: plagues, famines, droughts, earthquakes, and uprisings. There were also eclipses and comets seen in the sky. Nichiren was extremely concerned about the physical, social, and spiritual welfare of the Japanese nation. He also became convinced that only faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* could bring an end to Japan's problems. Because Buddhists were so wedded to their different views, shocking words were needed to get them to reevaluate and change their beliefs. Here are Nichiren's words justifying his approach:

If a person was about to kill your parents, wouldn't you try to warn them? If a bad son insane with drunkenness threatens to kill his father and mother, wouldn't you try to stop him? If an evil person is trying to burn temples and pagodas, wouldn't you try to stop that person? If your child is seriously ill, wouldn't you try to cure him or her? To fail to do so is to act like those persons who do not try to stop Zen and *Nembutsu* followers in Japan. (*Kaimoku shō*, II)

As one could imagine, the reaction of many Buddhists in Kamakura to Nichiren's words was at first extremely negative. But in time he gathered some disciples. In 1260, Nichiren submitted a document to the government in Kamakura charging that the calamities befalling Japan were caused by its protecting gods leaving the nation because of the popularity of unsuitable Buddhist schools. Nichiren claimed that to save the nation, the rulers must give sole homage to the *Lotus Sūtra*. If not, he predicted that foreign invasions and civil disturbances would occur. The government did not respond, and Pure Land followers in Kamakura attacked Nichiren a year later. When he escaped, they convinced the government to exile him to the Izu Peninsula. During that exile, Nichiren took heart from the story in the *Lotus Sūtra* about a bodhisattva who was persecuted for practicing the *Lotus Sūtra*. Nichiren eventually came to identify with this bodhisattva, and he saw his sufferings

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was attacking Tendai doctrine. He argued that not only the *Lotus Sūtra* but also the Pure Land Buddhism should not be called "confrontational" because of its attacking the other schools. He argued that Zen Buddhists are the heavenly Pure Land

It is important to note that the invasions began: plagues, famines, and eclipses were also predicted about the physical, social, and political. He also became convinced that an end to Japan's problem was different views, shocking the people to change their beliefs. Here

How can I try to warn them? If a child is seriously ill, I must act like those persons in Japan. (*Kaimoku shō*, 11)

Nichiren Buddhists in Kamakura to argue that in time he gathered support. He was sent to the government and his ideas were caused by its unpopularity of unsuitable rulers. He argued that foreign invasions that did not respond, and a year later. When he was sent to the Izu Peninsula. He argued in the *Lotus Sūtra* about the suffering in the *Lotus Sūtra*. Nichiren argued that he saw his sufferings

as indicating that his destiny was to make Japan a Buddhist state based on the *Lotus Sūtra* and a springboard for a worldwide *Lotus* community.

When Nichiren was pardoned in 1263, he returned to Kamakura. Drawing on Tendai esotericism, he began to teach his growing group of followers to recite the title of the *Lotus Sūtra* as a *mantra*. This chanting of *Namu Myōhōrengekyō*, he taught, can itself bring realization of one's Buddha-nature. Like *nembutsu* in Pure Land Buddhism, this recitation would become central to Nichiren practice. Then in 1268, Nichiren saw the threat of a Mongol invasion as a confirmation of his prophecy six years earlier. He and his followers stepped up their efforts to convert Buddhists from other schools—efforts that in 1271 led to his second exile, this time to the remote island of Sado in the north.

It was on Sado Island that Nichiren became convinced that he was the emanation-body of Jōgyō Bodhisattva, the protector of the *Lotus Sūtra*. He also came to believe that in the age of the Degenerate Dharma, he was to be a new leader of the Buddhist faithful. While on Sado, Nichiren created the *Gohonzon*, a Great *Maṇḍala* that manifests his Awakening. In this *maṇḍala* are the characters of praise to the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Namu Myōhōrengekyō*) surrounded by figures of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, including Jōgyō. At a lower level are *nrihats* and bodhisattvas, and on the lowest level are Shintō gods and names of Tendai masters. For Nichiren Buddhism, this *Gohonzon* became the principal image used in devotions.

During 1274, the year of his return from exile, Nichiren retired to a remote sanctuary on Mt. Minobu, convinced that his message had been ignored by the Japanese nation. There, Nichiren turned his attention to clarifying his philosophy and training his disciples. Meanwhile, two Mongol invasions of Japan were attempted. These were again viewed by Nichiren and his followers as the invasions predicted years ago. However, in both cases the invading ships were struck by typhoons, and the invasions were failures. Then in 1282, the year after the second Mongol invasion, Nichiren became ill. He chose the disciples to succeed him and passed away. His hermitage was enlarged into the famous temple of Kuon-ji. After Nichiren's death, his school spread in different parts of Japan and split into various sects.

Nichiren Buddhism is considered a single-practice school, like Zen and Pure Land, because it teaches that liberation is attainable by chanting the title of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Drawing on Tendai's title exegesis, Nichiren taught that the title of the *Lotus Sūtra*, namely *Myōhōrengekyō*, embodies the power of the Dharma presented in the text. Chanting an invocation to the *Lotus Sūtra*—*Namu Myōhōrengekyō*—concentrates this saving power of the Dharma into the life of the Nichiren practitioner. Along with this *mantra* chanting, Nichiren Buddhism also uses the *maṇḍala* that Nichiren created. This *maṇḍala* is believed to help draw forth from the practitioner the inner qualities of his or her pure Buddha-nature. It is as though the *maṇḍala* is like a mirror that reflects these inner qualities into one's conscious experience.

To explain this experience of personal transformation through chanting, Nichiren taught that the *Lotus Sūtra* contains Three Secret Teachings. First is

that the Eternal Buddha, spoken of in the *Lotus Sūtra*, is an image of the innate Buddha-nature, or original Awakening. This enlightened life can be found within oneself by stripping away the layers of ignorance. Second is that the name of the *Lotus Sūtra* carries the reality and power of the Dharma that can overcome ignorance and reveal one's Buddha-nature. Third is that chanting is like an ordination platform. An ordination platform is where one is empowered to live the moral and spiritual virtues of Buddhism. Nichiren believed that as chanting embodies the power of the Dharma, it empowers one with the purity and positive qualities of Buddhahood.

To gain Awakening in this way was, for Nichiren, to realize one's "original Awakening" in the interrelatedness of all existence. Drawing on the Tendai notion that "one thought moment contains the three-thousand worlds," Nichiren taught that in the interpenetration of existence, each moment of life permeates all phenomena. This means one moment of chanting *Namu Myōhōrengekyō*, which embodies the "perfect truth" of one's true original nature, sets one anew in harmony with the positive dynamics behind the interrelated events of life. In this harmony, not only is one's spiritual condition affected but also one's material conditions.

However, more important than these visible signs of the Dharma's power is growth in freedom from afflictive emotions, incorrect views, and unhealthy attachments. This moral and spiritual freedom fosters the more positive qualities of Buddhahood, such as wisdom, courage, purity, and compassion. Nichiren believed that given the interpenetration of life, as these material, moral, and spiritual conditions of people's lives change for the better, society will also change for the better. Thus, Nichiren saw Japan as the center of a world-transforming community of followers of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Following this insight, Nichiren Buddhism has seen itself as working for a more enlightened, peaceful, and happy world civilization. The following words of Nichiren express this kind of experience:

If you want to be free from the sufferings of birth and death that you have undergone since beginningless time, and if without fail you want to attain supreme Awakening in this very lifetime, then you must realize the inherent, original perfect truth in all living beings. This truth is *Myōhōrengekyō*. Therefore, chanting *Myōhōrengekyō* will enable you to realize the innate perfect truth in all life.

Among the *sūtras*, the *Lotus Sūtra* is king. It is true and correct in both its words and the principle it teaches. Its very words themselves are ultimate reality. This ultimate reality is the ultimate Dharma. It is called the ultimate Dharma because it reveals the principle of mutual interrelatedness of a single moment of life and all phenomena. Therefore, this *sūtra* is the very wisdom of all the Buddhas.

Each moment of life includes body, mind, personhood, the environment of all living beings in the Ten Worlds, the non-living beings in the 3,000 realms from the plants, sky and earth to the tiniest dust particles. Each moment of life permeates the whole realm of phenomena, and is therefore found in all phenomena. Awakening to this principle is itself the mutual interrelatedness of life in each moment including all phenomena.

However, even if you Dharma is outside you, inferior teaching. . . . That *Myōhōrengekyō* is what free you from the suffer of your life.

The *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* the minds of ordinary beings that the sufferings of birth if one's mind is impure land is pure. There are hence is solely found in the

This is true of ordinary being. Enlightened mirror that can shine like of the inherent darkness cleaned, it will surely be phenomena, the truth of mirror night and day. *Myōhōrengekyō*. . . . If you certainly attain Buddha!

THE MUI ZEN

From the end of the Kamakura Period in 1603, Buddhism and eventually even traditional Muromachi Shōgunate. The society was becoming as it was turning to China Neo-Confucianism. However, the relation to the government was forged by Musō of the first shōgun. Zen that was less open than traditional artistic forms that existed.

Zen impacted Japanese Zen temples, which were became models for Japanese stone gardens of the late Edo period that spread across mountains or islands, across the sea of life (see Figure 9.3). The strong spiritual effect of an enlightened artist can be expressed in the work of ink-painting portrays the

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is an image of the innate enlightened life can be found. Second is that the essence of the Dharma that can be realized. Third is that chanting is where one is embodied in Buddhism. Nichiren Buddhism, it empowers one to realize one's "original nature."

Drawing on the Tendai concept of "three-thousand worlds, one mind," each moment of life is an expression of one's true original nature. The dynamics behind the life is one's spiritual condition.

of the Dharma's powerful views, and unhealthy attachments. The more positive virtues, purity, and compassion. In this life, as these material attachments are removed, society can move toward a more enlightened society. The following words of

death that you have unwanted to attain supreme enlightenment. The inherent, original nature of life. Therefore, chanting is the direct truth in all life.

and correct in both its form and content. These are ultimate realizations of the ultimate Dharma. The essence of a single moment of life is the wisdom of all the

the environment of all the 3,000 realms from each moment of life permeates all phenomena. The interconnectedness of life in each

However, even if you chant and believe in *Myōhōrengekyō*, if you think that the Dharma is outside yourself, you are not accepting the ultimate Dharma, but an inferior teaching. . . . Therefore, when you chant . . . you must have a deep faith that *Myōhōrengekyō* is your very life. . . . Your practice of Buddhism will not at all free you from the sufferings of birth and death unless you realize the true nature of your life.

The *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* says that when you seek the liberation of the Buddhas in the minds of ordinary beings, you will find that they are enlightened beings, and that the sufferings of birth and death are Nirvana itself. The *sūtra* also states that if one's mind is impure, one's land is impure; but if one's mind is pure, one's land is pure. There are not two lands, one pure and the other impure. The difference is solely found in the good and evil of one's mind.

This is true of Buddhas and ordinary beings. Deluded, one is called an ordinary being. Enlightened, one is called a Buddha. This can be likened to a dirty mirror that can shine like a jewel when cleaned. A mind clouded by the illusions of the inherent darkness of life is likened to a dirty mirror. When this mind is cleaned, it will surely be like a clear mirror that reflects the essential nature of all phenomena, the truth of reality. So, arousing a deep faith, diligently clean your mirror night and day. How should you clean it? Only by chanting *Namu Myōhōrengekyō*. . . . If you chant with deep faith in this inner principle, you will certainly attain Buddhahood in this very lifetime. (*Isshō jōbutsu shō*)

THE MUROMACHI PERIOD (1338–1573): ZEN AND JAPANESE CULTURE

From the end of the Kamakura Period in 1333 to the rise of the Tokugawa Period in 1603, Buddhism faced radical cultural changes in Japanese society, and eventually even tragic religious persecution. From the beginning of the Muromachi Shōgunate (1338–1573), the status of Buddhism was uncertain. The society was becoming more and more secularized, and intellectual interest was turning to China, especially to a popular form of Confucianism called Neo-Confucianism. However, Rinzai Zen held on to a special position in relation to the government that made it a kind of state religion. This relationship was forged by Musō Soseki (1275–1351), who was the religious advisor of the first shōgun. Zen was thus able to affect Japanese culture, in a society that was less open than in the past to direct religious teachings, through certain artistic forms that expressed Zen's subtle spirit.

Zen impacted Japanese culture through a number of different avenues. Zen temples, which were originally inspired by Chinese counterparts, became models for Japanese architecture. Temple gardens, especially the stone gardens of the late Muromachi Period, also created a new style of gardening that spread across Japan. In this artistic style, boulders represent mountains or islands, and planes of moss or sand symbolize the boundless sea of life (see Figure 9.3). But more than this, the gardens themselves have a strong spiritual effect on the viewers. In Zen calligraphy and painting, an enlightened artist can display his or her attainment through a certain vitality expressed in the work of art. The creative brushwork of the calligraphy or ink-painting portrays the spirit of Zen in ways that were appreciated by the

Japanese people. Often the strong personalities of Zen masters could be gleaned from the calligraphy or seen more directly in the ink portraits that seem to stare back at the viewer with extraordinary intensity (see Figure 9.4).

Another avenue of Zen cultural influence is to be found in the Noh drama. The Noh drama was influenced by a subtle Zen aesthetic sensitivity. There is very little external action in these dramas. Rather, what is portrayed are the inner thoughts, feelings, and states of mind and heart that are in the deepest sense unspeakable. The actors' expressions and body movements allow the interiority of life to surface in subtle ways.

Tea gardens provided another unique bridge between Zen and the secular Japanese society, especially in the following Tokugawa Period. A path of irregular stepping stones leads through trees and thick shrubbery to a small teahouse. Walking this way past a stone lantern, water flowing from a bamboo pipe, and a stone water basin for rinsing one's mouth, a person is led from the busy world into a quiet place where worldly cares and concerns are put aside. The quiet tea ceremony, with only little verbal exchange, creates a deep and lasting experience of affirmation, friendship, and peace. The tea garden became a beloved and lasting tradition throughout Japan.

While Buddhism was influencing the broader Japanese culture, the secular nature of that society was also influencing Buddhism. For example, the most important figure in Pure Land Buddhism during this era was Rennyo (1415–1499). Rennyo was known as the "Restorer of Shinshū." He traveled to cities and towns, converting to his ideas not only Jōdo Shinshū followers but also members of other traditions like Tendai and Shingon. In his preaching, a central

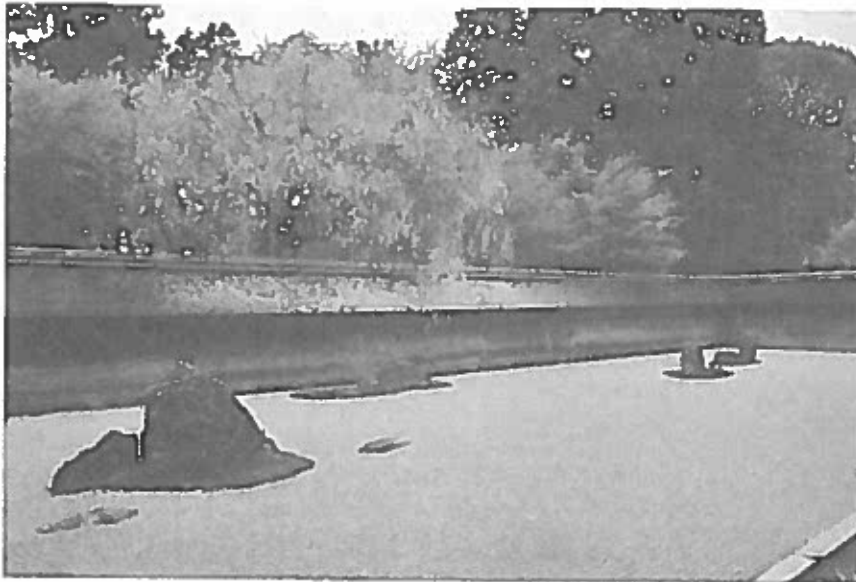


FIGURE 9.3. Japanese rock garden at Ryōan-ji Temple in Kyoto Japan, built in the late 15th century.

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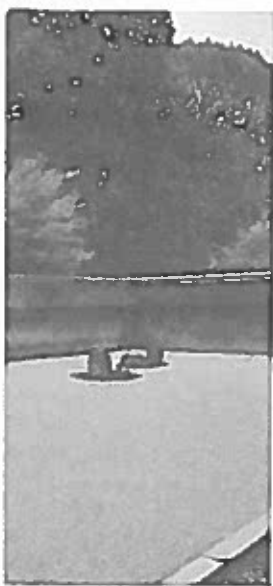
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Zen masters could be seen in the ink portraits that emphasize intensity (see Figure 9.4). The focus is found in the Noh drama. The dramatic sensitivity. There is a focus on what is portrayed are the movements that are in the deepest movements allow the

between Zen and the secular world in the Muromachi Period. A path of intricate shrubbery to a small stream of water flowing from a person's mouth, a person is led by the cares and concerns are shared, creates a sense of calm, and peace. The tea ceremony throughout Japan.

In Japanese culture, the secular world. For example, the most famous was Rennyō (1415–1499). He traveled to cities to attract inshū followers but also to preach his preaching, a central



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theme was the distinction between the inner and outer aspects of a person's life. In one's heart, he said, one should hold to a strong faith in Other power. With this inner commitment, one can turn his or her attention to the secular affairs of daily life, such as one's family and occupation. In dealing with everyday issues, the values of one's faith should be guides for how to behave properly. When talking about these values, Rennyō spoke of the Confucian virtues, an ideology that was becoming popular in secular society.

In this and other ways, Rennyō redesigned Pure Land theory and practice in a way that attracted a vast number of common people throughout Japan. Eventually, Rennyō's sect of Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism, the Hongan-ji sect, became a powerful feudal institution popular with the masses. Then in the sixteenth century, the Hongan-ji split into two schools: the Nishi (Western) Hongan-ji and the Higashi (Eastern) Hongan-ji, both headquartered in Kyōto. This split is institutional rather than doctrinal, and both schools combine to form the largest Buddhist school in Japan.

In the fifteenth century, the fabric of Muromachi society was coming apart. The shōgunate was divided by power struggles, and the populace was plagued by civil uprisings. The Ōnin War (1467–1478) brought an end to central government control in Japan, leading to the independence of provincial warlords. In this social chaos, the Pure Land and Nichiren sects created their own feudal states protected by peasant armies. A leader in this Buddhist movement was Rennyō, whose Hongan-ji sect became a powerful force in Japan. Nichiren Buddhist temples in Kyōto held great influence in the southern part of the city. These temples followed the Pure Land example and formed self-defense militias that later developed into armies. After some clashes with armies backed by the Pure Land tradition, a massive army from Mt. Hiei destroyed the Nichiren temples and community in Kyōto. However, this did not stop Nichiren Buddhism from continuing to grow. Later, it would organize into seven sects and remain one of the important forms of Buddhism in Japan.

Box 9.2

The First Book

Many serious intellectuals had a "first book," which, in a time of youthful crisis, set their lives on course. For some of my friends, searching for meaning in their confused adolescence, it was Thoreau's *Walden*. For Dorothy Day, in anguish over social injustice and an unresponsive church, it was *The Brothers Karamazov*. For me, interned in Japan during World War II, it was R. H. Blyth's *Zen in English Literature*.

That was fifty-seven years ago. I'm a retired teacher of Zen Buddhism now, and looking through those old pages, I find many points where I disagree. Nonetheless, I am still mining the riches of this remarkable work.

Fundamentally, *Zen in English Literature* is not so much about Zen Buddhism, the religion, with its practice of meditation and its course of *kōan* study, as it is about language and the thought and attitudes that produce language.

(Continued)

Blyth quotes Tennyson, speaking of a woman staring hopelessly out of a window:

Fixed like a beacon tower above the waves
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
Dash themselves dead.

Metaphor vividly exposes the net and indeed the hologram of people, animals, plants, mountains, rivers, the great Earth, sun, moon, and stars in all their infinite variety that is our personal life. Paul Shepard has shown how our language is charged with animal metaphor to describe human qualities and conditions: dogged, foxy, mousey, mulish, owlsh, sheepish, and so on. There are countless similar metaphors in daily use from plants, minerals, mountains, the weather, and so on. All expose the net, the unity, the great "cooperative"—In *Buddhadāsa's* words:

The entire cosmos is a cooperative. The sun, the moon, and the stars live together as a cooperative. The same is true for humans and animals, trees and soil. Our bodily parts function as a cooperative.

"Great wits jump" to personalize this cooperative. Blyth quotes Shelley's *Skylark*:

All the earth and air,
With thy verse is loud.

And comments: "That is, not only the skylark is singing but the trees and stones and rivers, the clouds, winds and air—all is singing, singing with the voice of the skylark."

This kind of example and explication, woven with such genius in my "first book," brought me to Zen Buddhist practice, where metaphor brings forth deepest understanding:

Yün-men said to his assembly, "Within heaven and earth, through space and time, there is a treasure hidden inside the mountain of form. It takes a lantern and goes to the Buddha hall. It takes the great triple gate and puts it on the lantern.

And it brought me to social action, to sit down squarely in the way of obscene defilements of the cooperative.

ROBERT AITKEN

In the sixteenth century, these Buddhist armies were seen by the warlords as standing in the way of the reunification of Japan. Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) played a leading role in this reunification effort. In so doing, he was especially ruthless in his drive to strip Buddhism of any political power. His army burnt down all the Tendai temples on Mt. Hiei, attacked the Shingon headquarters on Mt. Hoya, and suppressed the Pure Land and Nichiren

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ROBERT AITKEN

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armies throughout the countryside. The Zen schools escaped this suppression because they had not formed any kind of armed forces. Nobunaga's successor, Toyotami Hideyoshi (1536-1598), was able to steer a more moderate course because Buddhist political power was essentially broken. Hideyoshi rebuilt temples on Mt. Hiei and aided the construction of the Hongan-ji monastic complex in Kyōto. He also supported the Zen schools to which he felt indebted for their cultural contributions. The full unification of Japan came under Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616), who moved the capital to Edo (modern Tokyo). Thus began the Tokugawa Shōgunate (1603-1868), which is referred to as Japan's modern period.

THE TOKUGAWA PERIOD (1603-1868): STRUGGLE AND REFORM

Japan's "modern period" began with the establishment of the Tokugawa Shōgunate in 1603. This new period advanced the secularization of Japanese society and provided national unity. The government no longer granted Buddhism the leading role in the affairs of the country that it had enjoyed in medieval times. In fact, the shōgunate adopted a Confucian ideology based primarily on the Neo-Confucianism that had successfully contributed to the unity of China achieved during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Although the Buddhist schools were allowed to freely practice their religion if they did not criticize the government, they no longer exercised significant influence over the rulers or the educated classes.

The Tokugawa government did use Buddhism to enforce its tight control over Japanese society. All religious bodies were organized under the state. The Buddhist temples were registered, and all Buddhist schools were associated with either main or branch temples. All families in Japan were also registered with local Buddhist temples for the government to better keep track of the population. The Buddhist schools were forbidden to proselytize because people switching from one temple to another would disrupt the state census. The government did not support Buddhism financially, so the temples had to be financed by their official members.

As Buddhism was stripped not only of its political power but also of its intellectual and moral influence in society, Neo-Confucianism provided Japan with its prevalent worldview and moral code. In presenting their ideas and values, Confucian scholars in Japan also criticized Buddhism for being socially harmful due to its monastic religiosity, which seemed to them to have little social relevance. The Confucian challenge was strengthened by the fact that Buddhism at the time was torn by a sectarianism that had a divisive social impact and by the fact that there was a moral decline among the clergy.

A number of innovative and significant Buddhist responses to this Confucian challenge arose. One prominent example was a Buddhist reform movement founded by Jiun Sonja (1718-1804). Jiun was ordained a Shingon monk but was also trained in Confucianism and Sōtō Zen. As he matured as a Buddhist practitioner, Jiun became more and more aware of the need for a revival of

Buddhist thought, practice, and morality that was not limited by sectarianism. With a small group of disciples, Jiun developed a discipline of study, practice, and strict observance of the *Vinaya*. He called this new reform movement *Shōbōritsu*, or "Vinaya of the True Dharma." Taking the historical Buddha as a model, Jiun proposed that the Buddha's wisdom into emptiness as the interrelatedness of all things shows that all living beings are "one's own body." With this insight, one is inspired to treat all living beings as one would his or her own body. For Jiun, this kind and compassionate treatment of others is best defined in the Ten Good Precepts that are recognized by all forms of Japanese Buddhism.

Jiun believed that this view of the connection of wisdom with morality provided Buddhists with a common ground that transcended sectarian divisions. It also provided Buddhism with a rebuttal to the Confucianist claim that Buddhism is socially irrelevant. Jiun taught that the morality of the Ten Good Precepts gave all people a moral guide for family life, business practices, and government policymaking. Jiun did not call for the abolition of the Buddhist sects but taught that each sect should focus on what in its tradition is in accord with the True Dharma and the Ten Good Precepts. They should then live those fundamental aspects of Buddhism shared in common with members of other Buddhist schools.

Another more institutional example of making Buddhist religiosity relevant to the secular world can be seen in the Sōtō School at this time. Many of the Sōtō monks during the Tokugawa Period preached the Buddha's Dharma to the common people in rural areas. They stressed the connection between Zen practice and the daily needs of the people by teaching that secular actions can have religious import if performed in the true spirit of the bodhisattva. When a person has the heart of the bodhisattva and works with that attitude for the welfare of others, then his or her actions are as religious as those performed in the temple.

Besides these kinds of internal Buddhist reforms in Japan, another kind of attempt to renew Japanese Buddhism came from China. Around the beginning of the seventeenth century, an influx of Chinese Chan (Zen) masters brought new inspirations to the Zen world in Japan. Among these masters was Yinyuan (1592–1673). Yinyuan arrived in Japan in 1654, and at first settled in the port city of Nagasaki. He then moved to near Kyōto and was eventually given some property in Uji, also near Kyōto. There he had a new temple built that he named *Mampuku-ji*. He also called the hilly site for the temple *Ōbaku-san* after the region in China that he had left behind. This new monastic foundation would become the home of a third school of Zen in Japan: Ōbaku Zen.

Ōbaku Zen combined *zazen* and *kōan* practice with Tantric ritual, *nembutsu*, and the ritual recitation of *sūtras*. Chinese customs of dress and etiquette were also used in everyday monastic life, and the strict monastic rules as observed in China were also introduced. This particular reform was at first somewhat popular. Before Yinyuan died, he had expanded his movement to include some twenty-four Ōbaku monasteries around Japan. However, after a few decades, the growth of Ōbaku slowed because it never became fully

inculturated. In 1876, the Zen sect. Today, Ōbaku

The traditional form: and sophisticated innovation often focused on the or found in nature. For e greatest poets of Japan poetry with his famous him with a vehicle for e a monk, Bashō was a lay Japan writing about his as solitude and silence, presented in poems that draw on the spirit of Ze

Only Silence alone!
Into the rock cliff pe
The sound of the ci

An old pond, Ah!
A frog jumps in
The sound of water

The light of the mo
The four gates and
Yet only one.

Another important figure of Zen was Bankei Yōtaku and taught in the province. His message was simple and direct: "Mind is the Unborn Buddha Mind, and it is in harmony. In discovering the true nature of the Buddha, we become acts of the Buddha. The masters from the past, and the masters of the present, are all of the same importance of experience. We become aware of the Unity of this Mind developing." It is this innate

Although Bankei's Zen was different from the famous Rinzai master from the past, he agreed with Bankei about the importance of experience. Unlike Bankei, Hakuin focused on *kōan* practice. Hakuin's system of *kōans* that remains the core of Zen in Hakuin's system

not limited by sectarianism and a discipline of study, this new reform movement. Taking the historical wisdom into emptiness, living beings are "one's all living beings as one" with an impassionate treatment that are recognized by all.

Wisdom with morality transcended sectarian divisions. The Confucianist claim to the morality of the Ten Commandments, the Ten Precepts, and the Ten Commandments were shared in common with

Buddhist religiosity reemerged at this time. Many of the Buddha's Dharma teachings, the connection between teaching that secular activity and the bodhisattva works with that attitude as religious as those per-

in Japan, another kind of reform. Around the beginning of the Chan (Zen) masters among these masters was in 1654, and at first settled in Ōtō and was eventually had a new temple built for the temple Ōbaku. This new monastic foundation in Japan: Ōbaku Zen. Tantric ritual, *nembutsu*, of dress and etiquette strict monastic rules as a social reform was at first founded his movement to Japan. However, after it never became fully

inculturated. In 1876, the Ōbaku School was recognized as an independent Zen sect. Today, Ōbaku has about 500 affiliated temples.

The traditional forms of Japanese Zen were not receptive to the complex and sophisticated innovations introduced by Ōbaku. Instead, Japanese Zen often focused on the ordinary, everyday experiences of life, especially those found in nature. For example, Bashō Matsuo (1644–1694) was one of the greatest poets of Japan. Bashō brought the spirit of Zen into the world of poetry with his famous *haiku*. This simple and direct style of poetry provided him with a vehicle for expressing his Zen contemplation of nature. While not a monk, Bashō was a lay disciple, who, from the age of forty, traveled around Japan writing about his aesthetic/spiritual experiences. Certain themes such as solitude and silence, simplicity and ordinariness, seasons and sounds are presented in poems that lack any note of ego. The following poems by Bashō draw on the spirit of Zen:

Only Silence alone!
Into the rock cliff penetrates
The sound of the cicada.

An old pond, Ah!
A frog jumps in
The sound of water.

The light of the moon!
The four gates and four sects
Yet only one.

Another important figure from this period who also stressed the simplicity of Zen was Bankei Yōtaku (1622–1693). Bankei was a Rinzai master who lived and taught in the provinces where he was close to the common people. His message was simple and clear. All people have the innate "Unborn Buddha Mind." It is this innate reality that is the source of enlightenment. In that Unborn Buddha Mind, all things have their proper place and enjoy their true harmony. In discovering that reality, all of one's ordinary daily activities become acts of the Buddha. Instead of quoting the *sūtras* or patriarchs and masters from the past, stressing formal *kōan* practice, or emphasizing the importance of experiences in Zen, Bankei simply directed his followers to become aware of the Unborn Buddha Mind within them. For Bankei, the clarity of this Mind develops in a constant process along the way to Buddhahood.

Although Bankei's Zen was influential and continues to be so, the most famous Rinzai master from this time was Hakuin Ekaku (1686–1769). Hakuin agreed with Bankei about the importance of the process of Zen growth. But unlike Bankei, Hakuin focused on how this process can be nourished by proper *kōan* practice. Hakuin created a comprehensive *kōan* system with 1,700 anecdotes that remains the core of Rinzai training today. There are five types of *kōans* in Hakuin's system. *Kōans* of the first type are designed to bring the Zen

student to an initial insight of Zen experience called *kenshō* ("insight into one's True Self"). Hakuin, like Zongmi in China and Chinul in Korea, understood from his own experience that this initial insight must be deepened into full enlightened living. After *kenshō*, this growth is achieved by working with the four other types of *kōans*, which are designed for that exact purpose. In this way, one cultivates freedom, wisdom, and compassion in a process of growth in the Dharma that continues to the end of one's life.

Drawing on his own life experience, Hakuin revitalized Rinzai Zen with his writings, which give us a most detailed description of the process of growth in the Zen experience from beginning to end. He is also known today for his ink paintings (see Figure 9.4). Hakuin discusses his personal struggle in what he calls the "Great Doubt" as it was produced by his *kōan* practice. Based on his experience, Hakuin taught that *kōans* are used initially in meditation and daily life to generate the Great Doubt, or an existential questioning of the suffering condition of oneself and the world. This Doubt is called "Great" because it is not an objective doubt concerning a particular question or some particular phenomenon in the world. Rather, it is a "mass of Great Doubt" in which oneself and the world are no longer separate realities.

This Great Doubt is, Hakuin says, in tension with one's belief in "self power," the power of one's True Self or Buddha-nature to break this mass of Great Doubt and produce Awakening. In this intense process, one works on his or her *kōan* with the guidance of a master. The master moves the disciple beyond thinking about his or her *kōan* in a dualistic and rationalistic way. Eventually, moving beyond such ordinary thought processes, there comes a moment in which suddenly and without willful effort, of itself the True Self realizes itself. One therein finds Awakening in a flash of "Great Enlightenment," or "Great Joy." Here are some of Hakuin's own words about the experience of this Great Doubt:

A person confronted with the Great Doubt sees in the four directions only wide and empty land, without birth and death, like a plain of ice 10,000 miles in expanse. . . . In his heart, there remains not a trace of desires or concepts, only the word "emptiness" as if one is standing in the wide-open dome of heaven. . . . If one progresses in this Way, without turning back, he or she will suddenly experience something like the breaking of an ice cover, or the collapse of a tower made of crystal. . . . Nothing gives one more joy than to break through the many-storied gate of endless rebirths in *samsāra*. This is the inner realization of original Awakening of all the perfected ones in the four directions. (*Orategama*, Appendix)

THE MEIJI PERIOD (1868–1912) AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Meiji Restoration marked the end of Japan's long period of isolation under the Tokugawa government. Japan opened up to the outside world, and the Tokugawa Shōgunate was replaced with the emperor system. Among the first decrees of the new Meiji government were those that established a new



FIGURE 9.4. Ink on paper
1686–1769. Indianapolis M