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An Introduction to the History of Buddhist Book Publishing in Modern Japan

The spread of letterpress and other Western-style printing technologies throughout Japanese society during the Meiji period is often thought to be the cause of the rapid decline in traditional printing technologies that had existed since the Edo period. However, in the case of highly specialized books like Buddhist volumes, well-established publishing companies that had existed since the Edo period had an enthusiastic readership firmly in their grip. Insofar as these companies adopted the strategy of only publishing the minimum number of books they could sell, there was no need for them to rush to introduce letterpress printing or to master mass-quantity or high-speed printing technologies. Yet, Buddhist publishing companies in Tokyo quickly introduced Western-style printing technologies from the late 1880s to the late 1890s, as Meiji Enlightenment-era intellectuals had formed publishing companies in an attempt to widely share Buddhist doctrines with the general public. Conversely, Kyoto Buddhist publishing companies persisted in using woodblock printing and Japanese-style bookbinding as they needed to sell commentaries on Buddhist scriptures and the like to priests engaged in religious training. However, these companies began to recognize the convenience of smaller, letterpress-printed, Western-bound books. Thus, the turn of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of the decline of Japan's traditional printing technologies.

KEYWORDS: Buddhist book publishing—letterpress printing—woodblock printing—Western-bound books—Japanese-bound books

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IN DISCUSSIONS of the history of publishing in modern Japan, Motogi Shōzō 本木昌造 is always mentioned. From the Bakumatsu period onward, this Japanese interpreter of Dutch worked hard to create Japanese-character print, and laid the foundation of the Tōkyō Tsukiji Kappansho 東京築地活版所 (Tokyo Tsukiji Letterpress Shop) (see KAWADA 1981; INSATSU HAKUBUTSUKAN 2003). Therefore, the attention he has received might seem reasonable. However, before rushing to the conclusion that letterpress played an epoch-making role in modern Japanese publishing history, I would like to highlight the words of Roger Chartier, a leading researcher on cultural history in Europe:

For a long time in China and Japan, woodblock printing was the dominant printing technology. The oldest woodblock-printed work is the *Hyakumantō darani* 百万塔陀羅尼, printed from 764 to 770. Above all, this fact clearly forces us to reconsider the old Western understanding that bestows absolute superiority on Gutenberg's invention.... Compared to letterpress, woodblock printing has many strengths. First, it does not require a massive investment for purchasing a printer and type catalogue. Also, it makes it possible to print very many copies.... Furthermore, with woodblock printing one can make adjustments entirely based on demand. This is because—unlike letterpress type, which would need to be repositioned in a typesetting case—woodblocks can be stored and reprints created in accordance with the market.

(CHARTIER 1992, 66–71)

Seeing the culture of woodblock printing in the East as unlike that of letterpress in the West, Chartier speaks highly of woodblock printing's ability to reproduce texts in large numbers, as well as its flexibility that enables repeated reprintings.

I am not trying to make a forced argument based on the above that letterpress did not have any influence on modern Japan; the European printing technology adopted by Japanese society during the Meiji period (1868–1912) had improved considerably since the time of Gutenberg. However, it should be emphasized that amid the cultural situation of the Edo period (1603–1868), woodblock printing was able to provide plenty of books to meet an ever-expanding demand. In order to explain the modern Japanese publishing industry's adoption of letterpress, we must look for either the emergence of a readership that did not exist during the Edo period, or the rapid expansion of an existing one.

In light of the above discussion, Nagamine Shigetoshi's 永嶺重敏 claim that the need for letterpress in Japanese society rapidly increased during the mid-

1890s is very convincing (NAGAMINE 2004): national newspaper and popular magazine production became extremely concentrated in Tokyo after postal routes were established by the expansion of railway networks.

However, did the stiff, academically-oriented books of the Edo period on Buddhism, Confucianism, and the like—referred to as *mono no hon* 物の本—similarly switch to letterpress? There was a strong tendency for the bookstores that sold such books to specialize by genre. For example, in Kyoto during the mid-Edo period and later, these bookstores established themselves as purveyors to specific sects (*goyō shorin* 御用書林): Murakami Kanbē 村上勘兵衛 for the Nichiren sect, Sawada Kichizaemon 沢田吉左衛門 for the Jōdo sect, and Ogawa Tazaemon 小川多左衛門 for the Zen sect (HIKINO 2015). If we assume that *mono no hon* were in the first place not intended to be sold in large numbers but rather simply in quantities that would reliably be purchased by a core set of readers, then the influence of a new technology on them was probably different than that of newspapers and magazines.

While the publishing world has recently been undergoing rapid transformations due to the technological innovation of electronic publishing (YAMADA 2011), this paper will look back to Meiji period society to examine the various aspects of the changes brought about in Buddhist books—one of the representative kinds of *mono no hon*—due to the spread of Western-style printing technology.

Quantitative Analysis of Buddhist Books Published During the Meiji Period

In Table 1, based on the printing method (woodblock/letterpress) I categorized the Buddhist books listed in *Kokuritsu kokkai toshokan shozō Meiji ki kankō tosho mokuroku* 国立国会図書館所蔵明治期刊行図書目録 (Catalogue of Books Published During the Meiji Period Held by the National Diet Library) that were published in Tokyo and Kyoto (KOKURITSU KOKKAI TOSHOKAN SEIRIBU 1971, vol. 1, 201–482).¹ Since all books published in Japan are required to be donated to the National Diet Library (NDL NYŪMON HENSHŪ INKAI 1998, 114–45), the data in Table 1 exhaustively covers all Buddhist books published during the Meiji period, excluding the likes of private or regional publications.

From Table 1, we can see that there is a clear difference in the introduction of letterpress between Tokyo and Kyoto publishers of Buddhist books. In the case of the former, between 1883 and 1887 letterpress-printed books became predominant, and around the turn of the twentieth century, woodblock-printed books

1. To determine whether a book was woodblock or letterpress printed, I used the National Diet Library's Digital Collection. When it was difficult to determine this, I examined the actual book.

YEAR RANGE	TOKYO			KYOTO		
	WOODBLOCK	LETTERPRESS	TOTAL	WOODBLOCK	LETTERPRESS	TOTAL
1868–72 (Meiji 1–5)				1	0	1
1873–77 (Meiji 6–10)	34	2	36	41	4	45
1878–82 (Meiji 11–15)	119	18	137	219	50	269
1883–87 (Meiji 16–20)	97	140	237	229	55	284
1888–92 (Meiji 21–25)	63	233	296	227	234	461
1893–97 (Meiji 26–30)	42	272	314	96	295	391
1898–1902 (Meiji 31–35)	8	257	265	22	217	239
1903–07 (Meiji 36–40)	11	237	248	22	157	179
1908–12 (Meiji 41–45)	10	325	335	36	282	318

Table 1. Buddhist books published in Tokyo and Kyoto during the Meiji period (categorized by printing method).

basically died out. However, in the case of Kyoto, it is only from around 1893 that letterpress books surpassed woodblock-printed ones, having steadily established themselves.

While shedding light on the complicated situation that led to the introduction of letterpress, I venture here to compare books based on place of publication. This is because if we compare them based on genre, the above differences can be more vividly grasped. For example, consider *waka* 和歌 poetry books. Letterpress was adopted even later than in the case of Buddhist books, and even into the first decade of the twentieth century and later, woodblock-printed books continued to have a strong presence (KOKURITSU KOKKAI TOSHOKAN SEIRIBU 1973, vol. 4, 323–72). In contrast, in the case of physics, chemistry, and other science-related works, both printing technologies were not used at the same time; the era of letterpress came all of a sudden (KOKURITSU KOKKAI TOSHOKAN SEIRIBU 1973, vol. 3, 110–32).

Above, using genre and place of publication, we have obtained a vivid glimpse of the differences in the responses of the publishing industry to the introduction of letterpress printing. What lay in the background to all of this? Having a long tradition, and the attachment to a familiar technology by conservative, estab-

YEAR RANGE	TOKYO			KYOTO		
	Japanese Binding	Western Binding	Total	Japanese Binding	Western Binding	Total
1868–72 (Meiji 1–5)				1	0	1
1873–77 (Meiji 6–10)	36	0	36	45	0	45
1878–82 (Meiji 11–15)	134	3	137	263	6	269
1883–87 (Meiji 16–20)	158	79	237	258	26	284
1888–92 (Meiji 21–25)	89	207	296	246	215	461
1893–97 (Meiji 26–30)	65	249	314	179	212	391
1898–1902 (Meiji 31–35)	22	243	265	89	150	239
1903–07 (Meiji 36–40)	27	221	248	54	125	179
1908–12 (Meiji 41–45)	27	308	335	68	250	318

Table 2. Buddhist books published in Tokyo and Kyoto during the Meiji period (categorized by binding style).

lished publishers of poetry and Buddhist books probably played a role. However, to hold that a natural shift to letterpress began when an emotional rejection of a new technology went away is nothing more than abductive reasoning done from our present perspective.

Therefore, in order to more closely examine the situation that led to the introduction of Western printing technology, I created Table 2, which divides the Buddhist books published during the Meiji period in Tokyo and Kyoto into ones bound in Japanese style (*wasōbon* 和装本) and Western style (*yōsōbon* 洋装本).² The former are books made using traditional Japanese production methods. While this usually also refers to scrolls and the like, the majority of Meiji period Buddhist books are *fukuro toji* 袋綴じ (lit. “pouch-bound”). Within the category of “Buddhist books” many accordion-style (*orihon* 折本) scriptures are included, and thus I have classified them under the category of “Japanese-bound.” On the

2. This is the same method as used in Table 1. See note 1.

other hand, the latter are books made using the Western method of bringing together double-sided sheets of paper in several fold sections, trimming them on three sides, and wrapping them with a cover. While a few of the Buddhist books included in the table do not strictly fit this definition, such as single-sided postcard collections and letterpress-printed design drawing collections, for convenience, I have classified them in this category.

I chose to use not only woodblock printing and letterpress printing but also *wasō* and *yōsō* as markers of the adoption of Western printing technology in Japanese society because Kōno Kensuke 紅野謙介 argues that, along with letterpress printing, Western-style book production methods also led to major changes in modern Japanese printing culture (KŌNO 1999, 13–44). While the number of sheets that can be bound in *fukuro toji* books—comprised of thick *washi* 和紙 (Japanese paper) folded in half and laid on top of one another—is limited (most were around one hundred sheets), Western paper can be printed on both sides and Western-style binding can handle many sheets of paper. It therefore, argues Kōno, brought about drastic change in Japan's world of traditional books, and books began to function as individual massive storehouses of knowledge. As an example, he points to the letterpress-printed, Western-bound *Kaisei saigoku risshi hen* 改正西国立志編, the revised Japanese translation of Samuel Smiles' *Self Help*, that was published as a 764-page tome in 1877.

In this way, Kōno argues that letterpress double-sided printing and the complicated binding techniques of Western books came together to rapidly change modern Japan's publishing culture. Being a study of the relationship between *mono no hon* and Western style-printing technology, this is a very important point for the present paper. If we only focus on letterpress printing, it is hard to see a strong reason for using this technology when printing the academic books that were *mono no hon*; its primary characteristic is the ability to speedily reproduce a massive amount of information. However, if we also see increasing the amount of information that can be included in a single book as a characteristic of Western printing technology, then one would think that publishers of such books must have wanted at all costs to introduce them into their business operations.

Yet Table 2 goes against our expectations: the introduction of Western binding and letterpress do not really appear to be connected. As I mentioned, between 1883 and 1887 in Tokyo, letterpress books surpassed woodblock ones. However, at this time there were many more Japanese-bound books than Western ones. The strength of Japanese-bound books was even more pronounced in Kyoto. At any rate, this neck-and-neck situation continued until the mid-1890s. Even into the first decade of the twentieth century, approximately 30 percent of Buddhist books continued to be published using Japanese binding.

This time lag between the introduction of letterpress printing and of Western-bound books was due to companies still producing many Japanese-bound

books comprised of folded-in-half sheets of paper that had been letterpress printed only on one side. Despite Western-bound books holding more information, and letterpress, with its ability to print double-sided, being suited for Western binding, why did Buddhist publishers not adopt both Western binding and letterpress printing? We could speculate that mastering Western-style book manufacturing involved more difficulties than letterpress. However, there were many publishers that were releasing both letterpress-printed, Western-bound books and letterpress-printed, Japanese-bound books at the same time. Therefore, we can only conclude that they chose to publish Japanese-bound books even though they were able to make Western-bound ones as well. The only way we can elucidate the reason for this choice—following Kōno Kensuke's highlighting of the revolutionary nature of the physical *form* of Western-bound books—is to steadily examine the relationship between the material characteristics of Japanese-bound Buddhist books and how they were read.

In this section, I carried out a numerical analysis of Buddhist books published in the Meiji period, bringing several important points into relief along the way. I am particularly interested in the circumstances surrounding Japan's traditional printing technology steadfastly remaining in use during the Meiji period, as well as those surrounding the time gap between the introduction of letterpress printing and Western binding. However, I want to especially emphasize that the spread of letterpress and Western binding was not the inevitable result of their overwhelmingly convenient nature but rather was due to the active choices of publishing companies. Let us thus examine below what served as the basis for these choices.

Tokyo Buddhist Publishers and Their Strategies

Above I made clear that the incorporation of Western printing technology into Buddhist book publishing in Tokyo was a comparatively smooth process. Here, let us turn to the top ten publishers of Buddhist books in the capital at the time (Table 3). I want to emphasize that many Buddhist publishers in Tokyo chose to focus on selling either letterpress-printed books *or* woodblock-printed ones.

For example, Kōmeisha and Tetsugaku Shoin clearly chose to put their effort into selling letterpress-printed books. On the other hand, Senshōbō and Ōmuraya Shoten specialized in woodblock-printed books. The only exception to this rule is Yōmankaku, which was the top Buddhist publishing company in Tokyo: half of its Buddhist books were letterpress-printed, and the other half woodblock-printed. This appears to have been due to them switching their focus from woodblock-printed, Japanese-bound books to letterpress-printed, Western-bound books around the mid-1890s. We can easily surmise why Tokyo Buddhist publishers split into a camp that firmly stuck with the woodblock

PUBLISHING COMPANY (DATE FOUNDED)	BOOKS	WOODBLOCK LETTERPRESS	WESTERN-BOUND JAPANESE-BOUND	APPROX. % OF BUDDHIST BOOKS OVERALL
Yōmankaku 擁万閣 (Morie Shoten 森江書店) End of Edo Period	178	86 92	95 83	10%
Kōmeisha 鴻盟社 1882 (Meiji 15)	151	10 141	38 113	8%
Tetsugaku Shoin 1887 (Meiji 20)	105	1 104	3 102	6%
Kōyūkan 光融館 1890 (Meiji 23)	52	1 51	11 41	3%
Senshōbō 千鍾房 (Suharaya 須原屋) First Half of Edo Period	46	30 16	39 7	2%
Ōmuraya Shoten 大村屋 書店 End of Edo Period	44	42 2	43 1	2%
Hakubundō 博文堂 1887 (Meiji 20)	38	0 38	0 38	2%
Kokumosha 国母社 1888 (Meiji 21)	33	0 33	0 33	2%
Bunmeidō 文明堂 Between 1897 and 1906 (Meiji 30s)	33	0 33	0 33	2%
Muga Sanbō 無我山房 1904 (Meiji 37)	31	0 31	0 31	2%
Other Publishers —	1157	215 942	329 828	62%

Table 3. Buddhist books published during the Meiji period in Tokyo (by publisher).

printing and Japanese binding tradition, and one that jumped on the new letterpress printing technology and Western binding technique; the former (including Yōmankaku) were all founded in the Edo period.

However, this is not a simple case of conservative, established companies not understanding the capabilities of new technology. Rather, their primary products included books firmly connected to the reading practice of Buddhists, such as service books for laypeople and sutras. Even today sutras are published as accordion-style books for ease of reading. Service books for laypeople are also not a good fit for letterpress. While many are *fukuro toji*, sheets are single-sided with two or four lines printed on each half in order to make it easier to recite their content. In other words, for Buddhist publishers that had existed since the Edo period, the most stable sales could be expected from sutra books and the

like, and they could not just begin using letterpress printing and Western binding for these books that had very particular uses.

Some of the woodblock-printed, Japanese-bound Buddhist books from old, established publishers were commentaries on sutras by famous scholar-priests. Since there was a core set of readers for both these and sutra books, they were steadily sold off in small amounts. There were not many situations in which the Buddhist publishing companies founded in the Edo period relied on the mass reproduction function of letterpress.

As we have seen above, Buddhist books strongly connected to practice (such as the recitation of sutras) was a genre into which letterpress printing and Western bookbinding could not be easily introduced. However, in a place like Tokyo—where there was little demand for Buddhist books in the first place and new technology was being adopted for newspapers and magazines—a business could not be run in a stable fashion by simply sticking to tradition. Old, established publishers thus gradually died out. What kinds of strategies did the newly-established Tokyo publishers in Table 3 adopt when introducing new technology at an early stage? Below, I will examine how Buddhist books came to be printed using letterpress and bound in a Western style. To do so, I will use Tetsugaku Shoin as a case study because the circumstances surrounding its founding are clear.

Tetsugaku Shoin was founded by the enlightenment intellectual Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919). Enryō, who was born into the Shin sect Ōtani branch temple Jikōji 慈光寺 (Echigo Nagaoka), studied in Tokyo University's Department of Philosophy (Faculty of Letters) with the support of Higashi Honganji. The activities in which he would engage to revitalize the Buddhist world went beyond his denomination. For example, Enryō established the Tetsugakukan 哲学館 (Philosophy Academy) in 1887, working to provide an education to committed students regardless of their religious background. The same year he also established Tetsugaku Shoin, which aimed to publish philosophy-related works not caught up in the pursuit of narrow self-interest (TÖYŌ DAIGAKU SŌRITSU HYAKUNENSHI HENSAN IINKAI 1993, 56–114). Having established Tetsugaku Shoin to share his thought widely in society, what kinds of books did Enryō then publish?

Upon the founding of Tetsugaku Shoin, Enryō released *Bukkyō katsuron joron* 仏教活論序論 (Prolegomena to a Living Discourse on Buddhism), letterpress printed and bound in a Western style. It serves as excellent material for examining his company strategy. Below is a quotation from its introduction:

I have long been saddened by the lack of spirit in the Buddhist world. I have assumed the responsibility for its revival, and for more than ten years now, I have been exerting myself in an investigation of its truth. Just recently, I discovered that Buddhism conforms to the fundamental truths of science and

philosophy which are expounded in the West. Desiring to express this discovery to the world, I have drafted an outline for a long essay...

Present-day Buddhism practiced among foolish laymen, it is handed down by foolish clergy, and it is full of depravities.... My reason is that the priests of today are, in general, unschooled, illiterate, spiritless, and powerless; if I were to formulate my plans with their help, my aims would surely never be realized. Therefore, if among educated men of talent there is even one with the intention of loving the truth and defending the nation, he and I will exert our energies to those ends. I hope that educated men of talent will seek the truth of Buddhism outside [the ideas of] priests. (INOUE 1887a, 1–5)³

First, Enryō asserts that Buddhism matches the fundamental principles of European philosophy and possesses the absolute truth. There is a considerable amount of research regarding this claim which served as the basis of Enryō's thought (i.e., IKEDA 1976, 227–63; SUEKI 2004, 43–61; OKADA 2009); let it suffice to say that in this work we can find the enlightenment atmosphere of the first half of the Meiji period. Here I will center my analysis on the means by which Enryō transmitted his thought.

I want to highlight the harsh criticism of priests that follows Enryō's philosophical claim. He declares that priests of his day are unlearned and lack spirit, and calls for scholars and men of talent to pursue truth outside of the theories of priests. In other words, the first book to come out of Tetsugaku Shoin was not a woodblock print book bound in a Japanese style and meant for priests of a specific sect. Rather, it was a Buddhist monograph that transcended sectarian frameworks and actively sought a general readership.

In the preface to *Bukkyō katsuron honron dai ni hen* 仏教活論本論第二編 (Living Discourse on Buddhism: Volume 2), we can see even more clearly the kind of Buddhist book publishing for which Enryō aimed:

My research has not been transmitted to me by a teacher ... *My aim is not to inform those who know Buddhism about Buddhism.* I found that *if one wants to inform those who do not know Buddhism about Buddhism,* it is very difficult to reach this goal with the traditional commentarial academic style. I thus ended up embarking upon the course of carrying out theoretical research

Previously, we printed *Haja katsuron* 破邪活論 [Refuting the False] in size four characters. However, since it was difficult to carry around we shrank them to size five characters and are distributing it to interested persons. On the other hand, for this book ... we decided from the beginning to print it in size five characters for the convenience of readers.

(INOUE 1890, 1–4; emphasis added)

3. Translation from STAGGS (1979, 350–51). Modified.

Here, Enryō directs his criticism against priests who, using a “commentarial academic style,” study doctrine while being faithful to their sects’ past scholars, and declares that he seeks readers who “do not know Buddhism.”⁴ Additionally, he states that because he aimed to have the book read not only by priests but also the general public, he chose to print with letterpress instead of woodblock and in size five instead of size four characters, thereby reducing the size and price of the book. For Enryō, Western-style printing technology was best suited for his aim of expanding the readership of Buddhist books.

Although above I have discussed the introduction of letterpress and Western-style binding in the world of Buddhist books while focusing on Inoue Enryō’s innovative aspects, during the early Meiji period, the publishers and authors that were the first to begin using letterpress and Western bookbinding all had goals similar to Enryō, despite their varying degrees of difference in direction. For example, consider Kōmeisha, which was founded before Tetsugaku Shoin by Ōuchi Seiran 大内青巒 (1845–1919). In 1884, Seiran published his letterpress-printed, Western-bound work *Bukkyō taii* 仏教大意 (The Gist of Buddhism; ŌUCHI 1884). Also, as I have already mentioned, Yōmankaku, which at first actively published woodblock-printed, Japanese-bound books, would subsequently shift primarily to letterpress, Western-bound ones. One of the first was Takaoka Tamotsu’s 高岡保 *Bukkyō benran* 仏教便覧 (Buddhism Handbook; TAKAOKA 1888). Both of these books were, as can be surmised by their titles, outlines describing in simple language doctrines that were written for individuals either uninterested in Buddhism or who were beginning to learn about it.

What were Tetsugaku Shoin and Kōmeisha aiming to do by leading the way in publishing easy-to-understand, letterpress-printed, Western-bound introductory works? The writing of Buddhist books for members of the general public who were just beginning to learn about Buddhism was an innovative development of the early Meiji period; during the Edo period Buddhist books had been directed to the priests of specific sects. Publishers and authors like Inoue Enryō, who sought to explain Buddhist doctrine in lucid terms, chose to use letterpress and Western-style binding in order to part ways from the publishing strategy of just offering for sale however many books would sell. While not all of these survey books became bestsellers needing letterpress to keep up with demand, Enryō and others saw letterpress-printed, Western-bound books as appropriate containers in which to place their innovative thought.

4. It appears that at the core of Enryō, who called for people to leave behind sectarian Buddhism, was a conviction that sought to reform Buddhism on a national level. As IKEDA (1976) points out, along with Shiga Shigetaka 志賀重昂 and others, Enryō formed Seikyōsha 政教社 (Political Education Society) and advocated the “preservation of the national essence” (*kokusui hozon* 国粹保存) in its organ *Nihonjin* 日本人 (The Japanese).

Above I have argued that letterpress-printed, Western-bound books were well-suited for the Buddhist doctrinal survey works published in considerable numbers in Tokyo during the early Meiji period due to the ease with which they could be mass reproduced. However, when discussing the introduction of new technology into the world of Buddhist book publishing, we also must not forget that letterpress enabled information to be quickly turned into text. Consider the case of so-called *enzetsukai* 演説会. Kōmeisha's founder, Ōuchi Seiran, played a major role in popularizing these gatherings at which people gave speeches on Buddhism.⁵ The speeches, which were directed to a mass audience, were different from lectures given to priests of a particular sect, or sermons for parishioners. We can see them as having been a new method for sharing thought. When Seiran and others who had mastered this art were speaking, a stenographer would be busy at work off to the side. Then, the speeches were printed in newspapers and magazines as well as brought together by Kōmeisha for publication in Buddhist speech collections, thereby being shared with even more people.⁶

Incidentally, other Meiji-period Buddhist publishers beside Kōmeisha also released collections of transcribed speeches on Buddhism, which were without exception letterpress-printed and Western-bound. Speed was sought from Buddhist speech collection publications—to the extent that new techniques and technologies such as stenography and letterpress were used—because these speeches, due to their audience being the general public, also included plenty of current events-related material, which risked becoming stale if too much time passed until publication. The more related to the times, the greater the need for the speech to be letterpress printed and published in a speedy fashion.

However, Buddhist speech collections did have a drawback. While speech collections used the speed at which they offered information as a selling point and therefore were made at a fast pace, this was at the cost of many misprints. Many of them would first state that characters might be incorrect or missing, asking in advance for readers' forgiveness.

The incorrect and missing characters associated with letterpress printing could not be easily eliminated by just a careful editing job. It was often impossible for early period letterpress to reproduce the complicated characters found in Buddhist scriptures. (Woodblock printing, on the other hand, starts with a blank wooden board upon which letters are carved, and therefore can handle any kind of character, whether old, variant, or a special symbol.) Introductory works and speech collections aside, there was still a strongly-rooted resistance

5. I consulted IKEDA (1994) and HOSHINO (2012) regarding Buddhist speech meetings.

6. For example, Ōuchi Seiran's Buddhist newspaper *Meikyō shinshi* 明教新誌 (New Magazine of Meiji Religion) was an important medium that supported his "enlightenment" activities, and included many articles by him.

towards printing these specialized Buddhist scriptures and their commentaries using letterpress.⁷

Above we examined the circumstances by which letterpress-printed, Western-bound books were introduced in a comparatively smooth fashion into the Tokyo world of Buddhist books. Compared to Kyoto, which will be described below, the introduction of new technology appears to have greatly influenced enlightenment intellectuals like Inoue Enryō and Ōuchi Seiran's activities that extended to the founding of publishing companies. They aimed to share their thought even with people to whom Buddhism was unfamiliar, and actively used letterpress-printed, Western-bound books as receptacles in which to place their innovative thought.

However, until around the late 1880s to mid-1890s, there was a strong feeling of distrust among readers of Buddhist books regarding the issue of incorrect and missing characters brought about by letterpress printing. Thus Western printing technology was actively used in the publication of overview books, which made great use of simple expressions, and speech collections, which were transcriptions of colloquial language. While Kōno Kensuke argued that letterpress and Western-bound books came together to change books into large repositories of knowledge, in the case of Tokyo Buddhist books, works that were neither specialized nor large tomes paved the way for new technology and techniques, gradually making woodblock-printed, Japanese-bound books obsolete.

Old Kyoto Publishers and Letterpress-Printed, Western-Bound Books

While in the previous section we considered the process by which letterpress-printed, Western-bound books were introduced in Tokyo, in this section we will turn to the world of Kyoto Buddhist book publishing, which had a set of clearly different characteristics. The introduction of new technology in Kyoto did not go as smoothly as Tokyo, and there was a tendency to firmly reject the use of Western-style binding even after letterpress printing had been adopted. Using Table 4, which lists the top ten publishers of Buddhist books in Kyoto, let us look into the reasons that this new technology was slow to take root.

We can immediately see from Table 4 that there was a pronounced oligopoly in the world of Kyoto Buddhist book publishing. As Table 3 indicated, in Tokyo there were various new and old publishers in the market and, therefore, the books published by its top ten Buddhist book publishers accounted for

7. For example, the letterpress-printed, Western-bound *Shinshū kana shōgyō* 真宗仮名聖教 published by Shiji Senkō Shoin in 1889 offers an apology in advance regarding possible imperfections: "Since woodblock printing was not used, some places were omitted that could not be printed with letterpress, for which we apologize" (AUTHOR UNKNOWN 1889).

PUBLISHING COMPANY (DATE FOUNDED)	BOOKS	WOODBLOCK	WESTERN-BOUND	APPROX. % OF
		LETTERPRESS	JAPANESE-BOUND	BUDDHIST BOOKS OVERALL
Gohōkan 護法館 First Half of Edo Period	378	217 161	284 94	17%
Hōzōkan 法藏館 End of Edo Period	338	87 251	118 220	15%
Kendō Shoin 顯道書院 1890 (Meiji 23)	175	27 148	36 139	8%
Kōkyō Shoin 興教書院 1889 (Meiji 22)	149	11 138	26 123	7%
Nagata Bunshōdō 永田文昌堂 First Half of Edo Period	119	98 21	107 12	5%
Shōhakudō 松柏堂 (Izumoji 出雲寺) First Half of Edo Period	72	56 16	59 13	3%
Sawada Bun'eidō 沢田文栄堂 (Hōbunkan 法文館) End of Edo Period	64	36 28	42 22	3%
Heirakuji 平楽寺 First Half of Edo Period	64	40 24	51 13	3%
Issaikyō Inbō 一切経印房 (Baiyō Shoin 貝葉書院) Mid-Edo Period	40	6 34	17 23	2%
Shinshū Takakura Daigakuryō 真宗高倉大学寮 —	32	1 31	30 2	1%
Other Publishers —	756	314 442	433 323	35%

Table 4. Buddhist books published during the Meiji period in Kyoto (by publisher).

only around 40 percent of Buddhist books published in Tokyo during the Meiji period. In contrast, the books published by the top ten Buddhist publishers in Kyoto made up 65 percent of Buddhist books in the city. This was because old, established publishers had maintained a rock-solid position.

While one might think that new technology would not easily take root in Kyoto because old, established publishers were attached to the ones they traditionally used, they were actually quick to adopt letterpress. Let us look at the year several publishers in Table 4 first began using new Western printing technology. In 1877, Nagata Bunshōdō published *Gōshin yohitsu* 仰信余筆 (Writing Regarding my Reverent Faith) by Chōnen 超然 as a letterpress-printed, Japanese-bound

book (CHŌNEN 1877). Hōzōkan, on the other hand, released Inoue Enryō's *Shinri kinshin* 真理金針 (The Golden Needle of Truth) in 1887 as a letterpress-printed, Western-bound book (INOUE 1887b). Along with *Bukkyō katsuron*, this work is seen as a milestone modern Buddhist book. From the above we can see that there was no decisive difference between Tokyo and Kyoto in the time at which Western printing technology was introduced. Buddhist books in Kyoto were also similar to those published by Tetsugaku Shoin and Kōmeisha in terms of their innovative content. However, after the introduction of new technology, the characteristics of old Kyoto publishers were clearly different than those of new ones in Tokyo. In other words, while on the one hand they published letterpress-printed, Western-bound books, they continued to also publish woodblock-printed, Japanese-bound ones, as well as demonstrate an affinity for the—at first glance—mixed-up format of letterpress-printed, Japanese-bound books.

Why did old, established Kyoto publishers that from an early stage published letterpress-printed, Western-bound Buddhist books with innovative content continue to at the same time release Buddhist books that made use of traditional technologies? To investigate this issue, let us turn to Gohōkan and Hōzōkan, both publishers with deep connections to Higashi Honganji. Urabe Kanju 占部観順 (1824–1910) and Yoshitani Kakuju 吉谷覚寿 (1843–1914) often authored or edited books released by these publishers. They were important individuals at Shinshū Takakura Daigakuryō 真宗高倉大学寮, a Shin sect Ōtani branch doctrinal studies institution. Incidentally, there are basically no Buddhist books from Tokyo publishers in which they were involved (SHINSHŪ TENSEKI KANKŌKAI 1941, 90–108). For established Kyoto publishers that had worked as the specially appointed purveyors of books for specific sects since the Edo period, their reliable, major products were the works of doctrinal studies instructors who had many disciples. Of course, this was a publishing strategy also adopted by Tokyo's Senshōbō and Ōmuraya Shoten. However, Kyoto publishers were much more adept at securing a core readership. For example, the active publication of Kanjun's works by Gohōkan and Hōzōkan came to a halt after 1898 because his doctrinal teachings began to be criticized as heretical, and subsequently the works of Kakuju, who worked to solve this issue and, in doing so, heightened his authority as a doctrinal studies instructor, were published even more than before. These publishers, who had constructed a close relationship with Higashi Honganji since the Edo period, fully understood the kinds of Buddhist books that priests-in-training needed. Furthermore, both Higashi and Nishi Honganji had, since the Edo period, traditionally held at their educational institutions a summer retreat or *ango* 安居 during which hundreds of priests-in-training would gather to listen

to lectures, and these publishers thus had the advantage of being able to sell off many Buddhist books at this time (RYŪKOKU DAIGAKU 1939, 477–81).⁸

When viewed in this way, the reason the old, established Kyoto publishers stuck with traditional printing technologies is clear. While they used letterpress and Western bookbinding when publishing Buddhist thought that did not fit within the framework of a single sect or branch, asking doctrinal studies instructors from within these religious organizations to write books and then publishing them for priests-in-training was a reliable strategy for stabilizing their business. Taking into account Buddhist books' individual characteristics, they would choose the appropriate technology and techniques, at times making the bold move of publishing letterpress-printed, Western-bound books, and at other times making the sound choice of sticking with woodblock-printed, Japanese-bound ones.

The likes of scriptural commentaries written by doctrinal studies instructors began to be actively published as letterpress-printed, Japanese-bound books around the late 1880s. To make the reason for this clear, we have to turn to the priests' method of learning during the first half of the Meiji period. For these priests, who had since the Edo period studied sect doctrines in a traditional fashion, part of reading a text carefully was writing notes directly in it using a brush. However, this is difficult to do so when using books that have been printed with metal-type letterpress; characters are close together. Furthermore, the act of writing itself is difficult in the case of Western-bound books comprised of thin Western paper printed on both sides. In other words, letterpress-printed, Western-bound books were somewhat inconvenient due to priests' traditional learning methods. This led to the creation of letterpress-printed, Japanese-bound books, a format very similar to that of woodblock-printed books. In fact, even letterpress-printed Buddhist books used for priests' doctrinal study included borders surrounding the main text (*kyōkaku* 匡郭) to create a margin, and also provided adequate space between characters and lines. The many letterpress-printed, Japanese-bound books released during the Meiji period were due to old, established publishers aptly taking into account priests' study practices.

Let us review our discussion so far. Numerically, compared to new Tokyo publishers, established Kyoto publishers tended to persist in using traditional technology and techniques. However, this was not simply a manifestation of conservatism. For established publishers that since the Edo period had maintained close connections to specific sects, they could not leave behind their business method of reliably selling off hundreds of copies of high-priced Bud-

8. According to Hashiguchi Kōnosuke 橋口侯之介, when a high-priced *mono no hon* (such as a Buddhist book) was printed, publishers would make a profit if they sold around four hundred copies. Woodblock printing was a technology highly compatible with established publishers' Buddhist books for priests-in-training (HASHIGUCHI 2011).

dhist books written by doctrinal instructors within these religious organizations. Thus, while releasing innovative Buddhist books that were printed via letterpress and bound in a Western style, they continued to publish traditional ones for priests engaging in religious training that were woodblock printed and Japanese bound. It was difficult to write in letterpress-printed, Western-bound books, a practice that was part of priests' learning. Therefore, taking advantage of the benefits of letterpress (mass reproduction, fast printing), they published letterpress-printed, Japanese-bound books, trying to keep in place the format of woodblock-printed books as much as possible. In this way the Kyoto Buddhist publishing world continued to steadfastly release woodblock-printed books, and, above all, be particularly set on continuing to offer Japanese-bound books.

New Kyoto Publishers and Their Strategy

In the previous section, it became clear that the adherence to traditional printing technologies in the world of Kyoto Buddhist book publishing was based on the connections between established publishers and the headquarters of the various sects, which had existed since the Edo period. However, looking again at Table 4, one realizes that there is a problem that cannot be explained by the above. In the oligopolic Kyoto Buddhist book publishing world, in which profits from specific sects were distributed among only a limited number of publishers, it should have been very difficult for new publishers to enter the market. However, in the late 1880s we find, for some reason, two new publishers: Kendō Shoin and Kōkyō Shoin. With what kind of strategy did these publishers succeed in entering the market?

First let us turn to Kendō Shoin. The Buddhist books it published in 1890 (when it was founded) and the following year were considerably unusual, not because of innovative content but due to their number of pages and pricing. In the two years after its founding it energetically published thirty-three books, twenty-seven of which were letterpress-printed, Western-bound booklets priced at less than five *sen* and containing less than fifty pages. Why did this publisher quickly release only booklets in massive numbers after its founding? Looking at the back side of the front cover of *Anjin hokori tataki* 安心ほこりたたき (A Dusting-off Tune about the Settled Mind), which was published in 1891, we can clearly see their publishing strategy. We find the following under the heading "A Recommendation for *Sehon*":

At the time of the service for Saint Shinran's Hōonkō Otorikoshi 報恩講御取越 or of a relative's memorial service, regardless of whether it is Kyoto or the countryside, in all places there is the tradition of dividing "offerings" like red rice or eel head among those who participate. But with them being only food, are there not many leftovers? ... Fortunately, since at Kendō Shoin

motivated individuals are making many booklets suited for your use—in other words, *sehon*, which one is grateful to get instead of red rice or eel head, even dozens or hundreds of them—and we will send them at any time at a very low price upon application with payment ... we recommend changing offerings into ones that are fit for the times. (MATSUDA 1891)

Sehon refers to the practice of temples and leading parishioners giving, at no charge, booklets to participants in various Buddhist services (as well as the booklets themselves). While the practice of *sehon* itself had been carried out since the Edo period, Kendō Shoin was revolutionary in the scale of its *sehon* project. Upon its founding, the publisher had twenty booklets that could be used for *sehon*. When they received an order, they would quickly print and mail them off, taking advantage of the merits of letterpress.

Kendō Shoin *sehon* booklets were generally based on the talks of famous scholar-monks. For example, *Anjin hokori tataki* was the work of Edo period Zen monk Hakuin Ekaku 白隠慧鶴. Since they were distributed for free to people of all types, their content was concise and simple. They were also sold for a low price, with *Anjin hokori tataki* being offered for one *sen*.

Above we have seen that at the time of its founding Kendō Shoin adopted a publishing strategy of basically specializing in contract printing for *sehon*. With the world of Buddhist book publishing being an oligopoly, as a newcomer it was a sensible choice for them; even if established publishers had a monopoly on Buddhist books geared towards specific sects, they could publish *sehon* without hesitation. Furthermore, since temples and leading parishioners would purchase all of the *sehon* printed, they did not have to worry about losses due to unsold items. We should also incidentally note that since its founding Kendō Shoin actively published letterpress, Western-bound books. While letterpress was still not the perfect technology for printing entirely mistake-free specialized Buddhist books, they used it in the case of *sehon* booklets—printed in large numbers and simple in content—because they could reap profits by making the most of this new technology's characteristics.

Now let us turn to the publishing strategy of Kōkyō Shoin. Kōkyō Shoin aimed to make *Sekkyōgaku zensho* 説教学全書 (Compendium of Sermon Studies) its “cash cow,” so to speak. They began to publish it in 1893. At the end of the 1894 *Shinshū taii* 真宗大意 (The Gist of the Shin Sect; ed. Sasaki Eun 佐々木慧雲), one finds an advertisement for the newly published first volume of this series: *Kōsei hyōchū kandō boshō* 校正標註勸導簿照 (Edited and Annotated Illuminating Book for Guiding Others). Let us try to read Kōkyō Shoin's strategy from this advertisement:

Letterpress has spread, making things very convenient. Voluminous works can now be printed as pocket editions that can be easily carried around. Now, com-

piling sermons famous in both the past and present, this *Sekkyōgaku zensho* presents sermon examples of people of yore ... We will gather more and more excellent materials for instruction, edit them, and publish them in volumes one after another. (SASAKI 1894)

Kandō boshō was a set of scripts for sermons written by Sugawara Chidō 菅原智洞. Since Chidō was a major Edo period master of Buddhist sermons, this book had already been published as a woodblock print edition. However, it was massive—a total of twenty volumes—and thus inconvenient for carrying around. Kōkyō Shoin therefore used letterpress and Western binding to publish it as one book entitled *Kōsei hyōchū kandō boshō*.

The very same year, Kyoto's established publisher Hōzōkan also began printing in reduced size a large number of sermon scripts under the title *Sekkyōgaku zensho*. The first volume was the 1893 *Tsūzoku Genkō shakusho wage* 通俗元亨釋書和解 (Easy-to-Understand Explanation of the *Genkō Shakusho*). While the authors of these works may have been different, Hōzōkan's aims matched those of Kōkyō Shoin. Both served as material for sermons, and were easy to carry reduced-sized printings of what had been large woodblock-printed books.

With both Kōkyō Shoin and Hōzōkan printing sermon scripts at a reduced size, a great change was brought about in the world of Buddhist book publishing. While Buddhist publishers had adopted at an early stage letterpress and Western binding for overview books and speech collections because doing so enabled them to produce many copies at a fast pace, Kōkyō Shoin and Hōzōkan's biggest aim in publishing *Sekkyōgaku zensho* was to offer voluminous, high-priced Buddhist books in a convenient size. We could see their strategy as trying to, via reduced sized printing, heighten interest among their customers, that is, their assumed priestly readership.

Stimulated by the success of Kōkyō Shoin and Hōzōkan, in the end reduced-size printing of voluminous Buddhist books spread throughout the whole industry. This brought about a dramatic change in values: letterpress printing and Western binding came to be seen as best suited for character and information-packed specialized Buddhist books. In this way, around the first decade of the twentieth century, a situation arose in which the only Buddhist books that stuck with traditional technology and techniques were accordion-format scriptures and letterpress-printed, Japanese-bound ones made with priests' learning practices in mind.

Conclusion

In this paper, doubting the common view that the advent of letterpress during the Meiji period rapidly led to the decline of Japan's traditional printing technologies, I reexamined this issue using the publication of Buddhist books as a

case study. Since scriptures and layperson service books, the cash cows for Buddhist publishers, were closely connected to the practice of scriptural recitation, they were not made with letterpress or Western binding until the end of the Meiji period. Furthermore, being highly specialized in content, Buddhist books had overcome the problem of difficult characters with woodblock printing, and therefore at least until around the late 1880s and 1890s publishers showed a strong resistance to letterpress.

The traditional learning method of priests that included directly writing in books also was an obstacle to the introduction of new technology: Western-bound books—comprised of sheets of paper printed on both sides—presented difficulties when writing with a brush and, compared to woodblock, text printed with type reduced margin space to an extreme degree. Thus Buddhist book publishers during the Meiji period published many letterpress-printed, Japanese-bound books, comprised of paper printed only on one side and bound in the *fukuro toji* style, upon which text was printed with ample space between characters and lines.

Of course, new technologies always give rise to new business opportunities and change even the content of books themselves. Tetsugaku Shoin, the new Tokyo publisher, actively introduced letterpress-printed, Western-bound books as a new suitable vessel that could hold the innovative thought of its founder Inoue Enryō and others, and produced many bestsellers. However, I want to clearly state that in the world of Buddhist book publishing until the late 1880s and 1890s, the adoption of letterpress printing and Western binding was not an unavoidable choice upon which publishers' survival depended. Letterpress-printed, Western-bound books as well as woodblock-printed, Japanese-bound books were just options that could be chosen after a publishing company had carefully considered the nature of the book set for publication.

This situation considerably changed due to Kōkyō Shoin and Hōzōkan beginning to publish reduced-size prints of sermon scripts in the mid-1890s. When information that had been spread out over dozens of volumes began to be brought together in only one, the overwhelming convenience of Western printing technology came to be widely known, and the apprehension of readers of Buddhist books—that letterpress printing leads to many misprints—was gradually dispelled. Then, towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the default for Buddhist book publishing became letterpress printing and Western binding for both overview and specialized works.

In this way, by focusing on Buddhist publishers this paper has depicted the clashes and conflicts between new and old forces brought about by letterpress printing and Western-bound books, as well as the transformation in Buddhist knowledge itself that accompanied the introduction of new technology. However, due to my focus, many aspects have also been obscured. For example, in

Meiji period Tokyo, each publication genre was not completely specialized by field; the major general interest publisher Hakubunkan played a big role in Buddhist book publishing (Table 3). However, in this paper I was unable to look into the mutual influences between Buddhism and other publication genres.

It should also be mentioned that this paper's focus on publishing companies' strategies made it difficult to see developments relating to those who read Buddhist books. While readers are, of course, indispensable elements in the world of books, I have not made it concretely clear how the various Buddhist books introduced in this paper were received by them. In the past I carried out a survey of the book holdings of several Shin sect temples, and analyzed the characteristics of Edo period priests' reading practices (HIKINO 2007). In the future I would like to also examine individual readers' engagement with books based on the results of a careful study of Meiji period Buddhist publications found in book collections.

Having left many issues unexplored, this paper is, as its title indicates, just an introduction to the history of modern Buddhist book publishing. However, I have been able to present several points for discussion to this field, which does not have an abundance of scholarship, and it is my hope that they can serve as a springboard for further development.

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