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## Old Buddhism Strikes Back

### On the Relationship between the New Buddhist Movement and Shaku Unshō

The True Dharma movement and the New Buddhist movement were the two representative Buddhist movements of the Meiji period. Shaku Unshō (1827–1909), the leader of the True Dharma movement, spent the first half of his life as a monk in the Edo period. When he encountered the tumultuous persecution of Buddhism during the Meiji Restoration period, he became convinced that the restoration of the precepts (*kairitsu*) would lead to a revival of Buddhism, and initiated a wide range of activities. On the other hand, the New Buddhist movement was formed by young radical Buddhists who sought to rebel against the conservative religious world. They presented the allegedly anachronistic ideas of Unshō as an “old Buddhism” which needed to be overcome, leading to an intense conflict. This article attempts to examine the clash between these two Buddhist movements during the Meiji period with this context in mind.

KEYWORDS: Shaku Unshō—The New Buddhist movement—precepts—modern Buddhism—Old Buddhism

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**A**LTHOUGH in recent years the dominant narrative has undergone reevaluation, the history of Buddhism in Japan after the Meiji 明治 era (1868–1912) is usually described as having reached its peak in the early twentieth century with the Spiritual Cultivation movement (Seishinshugi 精神主義), led by Kiyosawa Manshi 清沢満之 (1863–1903), a monk of the Ōtani 大谷 sect of True Pure Land Buddhism (Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗), and his followers, and the New Buddhist movement led by radical young Buddhists disaffected by the conservative Buddhist world of the time. For example, Yoshida Kyūichi 吉田久一 (1915–2005), one of the leading scholars on the history of modern Buddhism in Japan, described the Seishinshugi as a movement that “sought to establish a modern faith by submerging itself in the inner realm of the human spirit.” In contrast, Yoshida described New Buddhism as a movement that “attempted to establish a modern faith by acquiring the qualifications of a modern religion through actively approaching the social” and, while acknowledging the limitations of the times, evaluated the New Buddhists positively (YOSHIDA 1959, 355). Yoshida’s assessment was based on a number of indicators to identify the “modernity” of religion (YOSHIDA 1961, 63). Against this backdrop, the sociologist of religion Ōtani Eiichi 大谷栄一 has recently proposed a reconsideration of such a teleological approach toward the “modernization of Buddhism” (ŌTANI 2012, 30). Parallel to this view, groundbreaking English-language scholarship on modern Buddhism since the first decade of the twenty-first century spearheaded by Donald Lopez and David McMahan has proposed understanding “Buddhist modernity” as a global phenomenon, finding common characteristics such as an orientation toward universality that transcends regional boundaries, an emphasis on scientific rationalism and on the individual, as well as a return to the Buddha. These insights suggest new avenues of research into the modernity of Buddhism (LOPEZ 2002, ix; MCMAHAN 2008, 3–25).

In addition to the issue of rethinking modernism, another focal point is the reexamination of the various roles of the precepts, which are said to have lost their meaning as religious practice after the decriminalization of the precept violation. Despite its indisputable centrality in normative Buddhist practice, the precepts also occupied a complicated position from the viewpoint of the conceptualization of “religion” in modern Japan. According to Isomae Jun’ichi, within the concept of religion there is an unconsciously embedded emphasis on “belief,” or verbalized belief systems such as doctrines, to the neglect of “practice,” or nonverbal customary acts such as ritual practices (ISOMAE 2014, 27–67).

Ōtani points out that the leading Buddhist intellectuals who identified with the ideal of “New Buddhism” embodied a belief-centered concept of Buddhism, and indeed attacked the practice of the precepts.<sup>1</sup> This article will deal with the intersection of these two pivotal Buddhist movements that developed during the turn of the century: the New Buddhist movement led by a younger generation of Buddhists, and the movement to revive the precepts led by Shaku Unshō 釈雲照 (1827–1909), a leading precept-upholding Buddhist monk (*jikaisō* 持戒僧) of the Meiji period.

As will be discussed below, the young New Buddhists dismissed Shaku Unshō, who devoted his life to the movement to revive the precepts, as “old Buddhism.” In turn, Unshō rejected the New Buddhists. This confrontation between the two movements is visible in the established history of Buddhism, as can be discerned in the following statement: “The ‘New Buddhism’ movement confronted the two Buddhist movements of the period. One was the Spiritual Cultivation movement, and the other was the Meiji faction led by Unshō, which took the conservative Buddhist position” (TAMAMURO 1967, 359). Although the conflict between Unshō and the New Buddhists is one of the highlights of the history of Buddhism in Japan since the Meiji era, it has not been sufficiently examined compared to the extensive attention given to the relationship between Seishinshugi and the New Buddhist movement.<sup>2</sup> This article, therefore, traces the relativization of the narrative of the “modernization of Buddhism” as well as the changes in the way precepts were discussed through examining the conflicts between the two leading movements in Meiji Japan. Section one briefly introduces Unshō and the New Buddhist movement, section two examines the relationship between Unshō and the founding members of the New Buddhist movement in the first decade of the twentieth century (1900–1910) through the journal *Bukkyō*, and section three and the following sections examine the ideological conflict between New Buddhism and Unshō. In terms of methodical approach, I analyze the discourse of the essays in the two movement’s main journals, *Shin bukkyō* 新仏教 (New Buddhism; first published 1900) and *Jūzen hōkutsu* 十善宝窟 (Ten Thousand Treasure; first published 1889), to reveal a cross-section of “the future of precepts in modern times.”

1. Ōtani positioned both Seishinshugi and New Buddhism as the representative movements of belief-centered religiosity in modern Japanese Buddhism; see ŌTANI (2012, 30).

2. Abe Takako 阿部貴子’s recent essay took up the relationship between Unshō and the New Buddhist movement (ABE 2011). While her work mainly focuses on providing an overview of the conception of morality embraced by religious intellectuals, it paid little attention to the ideological confrontation between the two movements.

### 1. *Shaku Unshō and the New Buddhist Movement*

Shaku Unshō was a leading precept-upholding monk during the Meiji period. He was born in Izumo 出雲 Province (present-day Shimane Prefecture) in 1827 (Bunsei 文政 10).<sup>3</sup> He entered the priesthood in the Shingon sect of Buddhism and trained as a monk during the late Edo 江戸 period (1603–1867). During the time of Buddhist persecution triggered by the edict to separate Shinto and Buddhism (*shinbutsu hanzen-rei* 神仏判然令) issued by the new government in the first year of the Meiji period, Unshō led a movement for the protection of Buddhism with the aim of restoring the precepts. He organized the Jūzenkai 十善会 (Society for the Ten Virtuous Precepts) to revive Buddhism with a focus on the Ten Precepts proclaimed by Jiun Sonja Onkō 慈雲尊者欽光 (1718–1804), a Shingon monk of the early modern period known for his pioneering Sanskrit studies (*bongaku* 梵学). With this organization as a foothold, he entered into a controversy concerning national morality (*kokumin dōtoku* 国民道德) commonly known as the “moral education debate” (*tokuiku ronsō* 德育論争) starting in the late 1880s. Furthermore, in 1879, he embarked on a program of denominational reformation by restoring the Threefold Training (*sangaku* 三学) and by tightening the monastic code. He soon failed, however, in these efforts and moved to Shin Haseji 新長谷寺 Temple in Mejirodai 目白台, Tokyo. There, he established the Mejiro Monastery 目白僧園, a unique institution for training Buddhist priests, and expanded the Jūzenkai movement. From early on, Unshō showed interest in improving education through developmental training and secular education. In the first decade of the twentieth century, he positioned Buddhism, Shintoism, and Confucianism as the “Imperial Way,” or the Unity of Three Ways (*sando ikkan* 三道一貫), and combined these three ways with precept-centered thought in an effort to engage in the education of the citizen-subjects (*kokumin kyōiku* 国民教育). In order to achieve this, he made the establishment of the Tokyo school his lifelong project, but it was not completed due to his sudden death.

On the other hand, as shown in the previous section, the New Buddhist movement has been positioned as a milestone in the modernization of Buddhism in conventional scholarship on modern Japanese Buddhist history. In 1899, progressive young Buddhists who sensed an atmosphere of stagnation within the Buddhist world stemming from the clericalism of the time, such as Sakaino Kōyō 境野黄洋 (1871–1933), Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡辺海旭 (1872–1933), Katō Genchi 加藤玄智 (1873–1965), and Takashima Beihō 高島米峰 (1875–1949) formed the Buddhist Puritan Association (Bukkyō Seito Dōshikai 仏教清徒同

3. For biographies of Unshō, see YOSHIDA (1902) and KUSANAGI (1913a; 1913b). The brief sketch of his life in this section is based on these sources.

志会, later renamed the New Buddhist Fellowship, Shin Bukkyō Dōshikai 新仏教同志会). The origins of this organization have typically been seen as having emerged from the journal *Bukkyō*, first published in 1889, as well as from the Warp and Woof Society (Keiikai 経緯会) of Furukawa Rōsen 古河老川 (1871–1899) established in 1893. In recent studies, it also has been pointed out that there was a broad backbone behind the movement, including the Association of Self-Reflection (Hanseikai 反省会) led by the students of the Honganji school of Futsū Kyōkō 普通教校, the “New Buddhism” theory of Nakanishi Ushirō 中西牛郎 (1859–1930) in the Meiji 20s, and the Tetsugakkan (the Philosophy Hall) group led by Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919; see TAKAHASHI 2012, 57–61).<sup>4</sup>

In “Our Declaration” (*Wagato no sengen* 我徒の宣言; 1900), which symbolizes the starting point of the New Buddhist movement, it stated that “the monastic customs of the present day should be improved, the temple organization should be renewed, and the old Buddhism should be gradually modified to make it a religion that finally meets the needs of the times” to rationalize doctrines and deny rituals. In addition, the New Buddhists declared that they were distinct from the “old Buddhists” and that “we do not have the slightest desire to help or share similarities with the old Buddhism” (SHIN BUKKYŌ SHI 1900a, 4). In line with this, they attacked the established Buddhist denominations as “old Buddhists” of which the Mejiro faction (Mejiro-ha 目白派) led by Unshō was a symbol to be toppled. In the next section, I will examine the role of Unshō in the journal *Bukkyō* in the 1890s as a stage in history leading up to the conflict.

## 2. *Shaku Unshō and the Journal “Bukkyō”*

The purpose of this section is to examine the image of Unshō presented in the magazine *Bukkyō* in the 1890s as background to the later confrontation between the New Buddhist movement and Unshō, which will be discussed in the next section, and to clarify how the confrontation ultimately developed. As mentioned above, the magazine *Shin bukkyō* is said to have been the successor periodical to *Bukkyō*, but with a more critical stance on the ideal future orientation of Buddhism. More specifically, when Sakaino Kōyō, who had played a leading role in the New Buddhist movement, took charge of the magazine’s editorials after the death of Furukawa Rōsen, his radical new editorials triggered a deepening of the conflict with established Buddhism, and prompted the founding of the Bukkyō Seito Dōshikai in October 1899 (IKEDA 1976, 282–83). To trace the genealogy of

4. Ōtani Eiichi also unveiled the genealogy of the discourse on “New Buddhism” in Meiji Japan, tracing back to as early as Nakanishi Ushiro’s idea of Buddhist reformation and the Hansaikai movement. See ŌTANI (2012).

the criticism of Unshō by the New Buddhists, it is essential to examine the fractious relationship of Unshō with the journal *Bukkyō* in the 1890s.

It is also noteworthy that, in the context of the same period, the debate over the reevaluation of the precepts in the Buddhist world came to a head well over twenty years after the original promulgation of the so-called meat-eating and marriage ordinance (*nikujiki saitai* 肉食妻帯令) of 1872. As explained by Ikeda, “the controversy over the issue of the precepts was rekindled around the time of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894–5” (IKEDA 1976, 264). According to Richard Jaffe, this delayed development was due not only to the modernization of the sect’s internal organization, but also to the reality that the sons of legally married monks began to serve as abbots of their temples after the meat-eating and marriage ordinances. Furthermore, Jaffe explains that at this time, the emphasis on the discourse surrounding “meat consumption and clerical marriage” shifted from the “doctrinal” focus of the early to mid-Meiji period to a focus on more practical realities surrounding contemporary Japanese Buddhism (JAFJE 2001, 189).

On the other hand, Unshō seems initially to have been interested during this period in discussing the precepts entirely from the standpoint of doctrinal orthodoxy. For example, in *Mappō kaimō ki* 末法開蒙記; 1897a; 1897b), he claims that the *The Candle of the Latter Dharma* (*Mappō tomyō ki* 末法燈明記; c. 801), which is said to have been written by Saichō 最澄 (766/767?–822), is a forgery that proselytized an evil theory “to destroy the wisdom eyes (*keigan* 慧眼) of the disciples of the latter-day Dharma and to corrode the minds of the learners of Buddhism,” and that the practice of the righteous precepts is possible even in the present age of the Latter Day of the Law (UNSHŌ 1897a, 4 *recto*). Nonetheless, his interest was in denouncing the “decadence” of contemporary monks. This, in his view, was contrary to the doctrine and orthodox intent of the Śākyamuni Buddha and denominational founders, paying little attention to the issue of the precepts from the practice-related aspect of the current state of the denominational organization.

In fact, however, Unshō was struggling to provide a rationale for the precepts that would go beyond mere doctrine and monastic discipline, and the key words therein were “national morality.” As mentioned in the previous section, Unshō advocated national education through the “Ten Virtuous Precepts.” Yet, the seed of the idea of demonstrating the usefulness of the precepts, which were originally the normative practice for Buddhists, by linking them with the secular public can already be found in the Edo-period monks who engaged in dharma-protection activities (*gohōsō* 護法僧; NISHIMURA 2018, 5–38). Unshō also legitimized monastic education based on the precepts from the standpoint of upholding social morality. In 1890, he established the Mejiro Monastery, renaming it from the previous Kairitsu Gakko 戒律学校 (School of Precepts)

under the three principles of “resolute aspiration for enlightenment” (*dōshin kenko* 道心堅固), “firmness of the essence of the precepts” (*kaitai kengō* 戒体堅剛), and “dual training in the Threefold Training” (*sangaku sōshu* 三学双修)” for the development of Buddhist priests (KUSANAGI 1961, 125–26). According to the prospectus for the founding of the school, based on the historical view of decadence that the corruption of monks since the late Heian 平安 period (794–1185) mainly caused by the demise of imperial rule and the rise of Samurai hegemony had also led to the corruption of society as a whole, the school was established in order to

restore the morality of society and promote the prosperity of the nation. Therefore, if we wish to restore the morality of society, to promote the prosperity of the nation, and to become a people of dignity and virtue, we must rely on monks who adhere to the Dharma and precepts. This is the reason why I wish to revive the precepts through purity and discipline.

(KUSANAGI 1913a, 120)

Furthermore, there is a similar logic in Unshō’s use of a metaphor in classical Chinese (戒香自然に、四民を薰し、皇化を裨益) that emphasized the role of the precepts in enhancing imperial rule and facilitating the elevation of the morality of the people (KUSANAGI 1914 *kenpakusho shū*, 12). It can be said that by reformulating this concept from the period of the Meiji Restoration in the framework of national morality, Unshō linked the legitimacy of the precept-upholding monks to social morality.

In the 1890s, Unshō expanded the Ten Virtuous Precept Society, recruiting prominent figures from various fields to its ranks of supporters, called “outside protectors” (*gegōsha* 外護者) such as influential educator Sawayanagi Masatarō 沢柳政太郎 (1865–1927), General Miura Gorō 三浦梧楼 (1847–1926), Prince Kuninomiya Asahiko 久邇宮朝彦 (1824–1891), Prince Komatsumiya Akihito 小松宮彰仁 (1846–1903), and prominent politician Ito Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841–1909), and published the monthly journal *Jūzen hōkutsu* and the Buddhist women’s magazine *The Dharma of Mother* (*Hō no haha* 法の母, first published in July 1893), and these activities were expanded against the backdrop of the heightened controversy over the precepts in the monastic world at the time. Considering the fact that, during this time in particular, many Buddhist associations were failing to continue their organizations and journals, this rapid progress is worthy of attention. In 1901 the membership of the Jūzenkai reached the staggering number of seven thousand, and it led to the creation of a nationwide network of over twenty branches (KYORAISHI 1901, 46). Examples of evaluations of the activities of Unshō at the time include the editorial of the *Hanseikai zasshi* 反省雑誌 of 1897 titled “Shaku Unshō and Shichiri Kōjun” (ANON 2005) and *Meiji jūniketsu* 明治十二傑 (KISHIGAMI 1899).



On the other hand, a review of *Bukkyō* during this period shows that in the first half of the 1890s, Unshō was an active contributor to the magazine and the relationship between the two was comparatively good.<sup>5</sup> An editorial titled “The Buddhist World in Meiji 26” (*Meiji nijūroku nen no bukkyō kai* 明治26年の仏教界) in *Bukkyō* claimed that “observing this year in the Buddhist world, in terms of morality, the idea of the precepts seems to have taken center stage” (*Meiji nijūroku nen no bukkyō kai*, 1893, 43). In the same publication, an essay discussed Buddhist organizations and intellectuals that promoted the precepts as Koizumi Ryōtai 小泉了諦 (1851–1938) of the True Pure Land denomination, who contributed an article titled “Precept Speech.” It also touched on the Self-Reflection Society that advocated the prohibition of alcohol and the advancement of virtue, the “Lesser Vehicle” Buddhist Dharmapala (1864–1933), who made a return visit to Japan, and Shaka Kōzen 釈興然 (1849–1924), who returned from Ceylon and founded the True Lineage of Śākyamuni (Shakuson Shōfū-kai 釈尊正風会). Among these figures, Unshō was considered the most eminent and was referred to as the “luminary of the Kantō region” (*Kantō no kōmyō* 関東の光明; *Meiji nijūroku nen no bukkyō kai*, 1893, 43).

Furthermore, NAKANISHI Ushirō, a pioneering advocate of New Buddhism, touted Unshō’s efforts as an example of the reformist trend of the time (1892) and presented the founding of the Mejiro Monastery as emblematic of the emerging trend of New Buddhism. According to his critical dichotomy, “Old Buddhism is theoretical (*rironteki* 理論的) while New Buddhism is empirical (*keikenteki* 経験的)” (NAKANISHI 1892, 98). Disaffected with the philosophizing of Buddhism promoted by Meiji Buddhist intellectuals, Nakanishi associated the reassessment of the precepts represented by Unshō with the rising tide of New Buddhism heading in the direction of an “empirical” base. In this way, one of the reference points of Unshō’s movement was based on the progressive image of New Buddhism, rather than reactionary Old Buddhism (NAKANISHI 1892, 97–102).

In the latter half of the 1890s, however, a number of criticisms of Unshō began to appear. Among these critical discourses, Unshō was characterized as spreading superstition among the upper-class and representative of an aristocratic Buddhism that adhered to the social status of its followers abandoning the lower classes.<sup>6</sup> After 1899, when the Buddhist Puritan Association was formed, the criticism evolved into a firestorm of what could be called “Unshō-bashing.”

5. The journal *Bukkyō* traces its roots to *Nōjunkai zasshi* 能潤会雑誌 founded in August 1888, and Unshō was one of its leading members along with Fukuda Gyokai 福田行誠 (1809–1888) and Kaji Hōjun 梶宝順 (1864–1920).

6. Examples include DAIROKUEIISHI (1896), DAIGOSHI (1897), TOKEIDAIANSI (1898), TOPPITSUSEI (1899), and ANON (1897).



The two main incidents that defined this conflict were the “halo problem” (*enkō mondai* 円光問題) and the “Ninnaji Temple independence disturbance” (*Ninnaji dokuritsu sōdō* 仁和寺独立騒動).

First, the “halo problem” was an incident in which Unshō is alleged to have sent to the Hakubunkan a self-portrait that had been crafted to imitate the halo of a Buddha at the time of his election as one of the Meiji Twelve. In response to this, Hōkō Dōji 方光童子 (real name unknown) stated that “I do not want to overlook the issue of Master of the Vinaya Unshō’s *enkō* Problem” because it encompassed three critical issues: (1) the fate of precept-based Buddhism, (2) the destruction of superstitious Buddhism, and (3) the nefarious effects of aristocratic Buddhism. Furthermore, he ascribes the essence of the controversy to the fact that Unshō, who was merely a Buddhist monk, sought to increase his stature as he gained admiration from the public (Hōkō Dōji 1899).

The second incident, the “Ninnaji Temple independence disturbance,” refers to when Unshō, who had distanced himself from the Shingon sect due to setbacks in the denominational reforms of the Meiji 10s, was granted the title of high priest and became the head priest of Ninnaji Temple in 1898. Together with the bureau chief, Morioka Jusan 森岡寿算 (d.u.), and the former princely abbot (*monzeki* 門跡) of the temple, Prince Komatsumiya Akihito, he reportedly took the opportunity to carry out denominational reforms. This led to an uproar surrounding the issue of independence and separatism within the Shingon sect, which had a relatively weak foundation for a centralized system.

It was also during this period when the Shingon sect began to introduce educational reforms, including the introduction of general education (*futsugaku* 普通学). As can be seen from the fact that Unshō and his patron, the educator and bureaucrat Sawayanagi Masatarō, were opposed to this and advocated traditional monastic training, there was also a concurrent conflict over the educational policy of the sect.<sup>7</sup> The plan that Unshō had developed at this time was documented in detail in a letter to his disciple, Unyu 雲雄 (d.u.). According to these letters, he wrote that he wanted in particular to

restore the precepts, which are the vital root of the True Dharma, and make the precepts the great master on which monks rely, to establish the foundation of mediation and wisdom, and to remove the evil customs of the middle ages and return to antiquity by establishing all the systems based on the true ideas of sutras and the Vinaya of Śākyamuni Buddha and divine commandments of the denominational founders and monk-emperors, and to rekindle the majesty of the country pacified and protected (by Buddhism), and repay

7. On the introduction of general education into the Shingon denomination, see ABE (2014).

the debt to the imperial household and nation. This is the original intention of the independence of the head-temple. (KUSANAGI 1913b, *shokanshū* 381)

As seen from this quotation, he sought to make an appeal for the reform of the monastic community from the restorative standpoint of combining the “monastic garden” system with the failed denominational reform plan of 1879 discussed in the previous section.

On the one hand, Unshō partially allowed monks with unique talent who excelled in monastic training, or the “upper roots” (*jōkon* 上根), to learn non-Buddhist studies (*gegaku* 外学) for the purpose of “making non-Buddhists embrace the correct teaching and liberating them (*gedō shōju saido* 外道摂受濟度; KUSANAGI 1913b, *shokanshū* 372). In addition to this, he planned to establish the Higher School of the Threefold Training (Kōtōsangakuin 高等三学院), taking inspiration from the national universities with graduate schools. Since he linked this to the “deterioration of morality in the nation” (*kokka tokufū no taihai* 国家徳風の退廢) and the ideal of “making learning flourish and the propagation of the teachings” (*kōgaku fukyō* 興学布教), he legitimized his denominational reformation associating the role of Buddhism with national morality and moral suasion (*kyōka* 教化). Thus, in common with Buddhists of his time, he planned denominational reform with a focus on improving Buddhism through moral suasion (KUSANAGI 1913b, *shokanshū* 382).

The conflict appeared to come to a tentative close when Unshō resigned as the head of Ninnaji Temple and returned to Mejiro Monastery. Yet, he continued to be the subject of criticism, as can be seen in an unnamed editorial (ANON 1899), in which Unshō’s ambition to collude with the government and become an independent chief abbot of a sect and the center of the Shingon Vinaya school was criticized (in figure 1, Unshō is satirized as a person who would dismember the sect like a chicken). In an editorial in *Bukkyō* in 1900, the same year that the first issue of *Shin bukkyō* was published, an essay denounced the selfishness and worldliness of the old Buddhists, and even cited Unshō as a representative of these tendencies (ANON 1901).

As we have seen in this section, the contours of the confrontation between the New Buddhist movement and Unshō can already be gleaned from the criticism of Unshō in the late 1890s in the journal *Bukkyō*. In a sense, this is not surprising given the fact that the writers of both *Bukkyō* and *Shin bukkyō* overlapped, and that their criticism was concentrated particularly in the infancy of the New Buddhist movement. However, it is noteworthy that simultaneously, as the public image of Unshō as a pure precept-upholding monk was being crafted, an image of Unshō as the leader of the “old Buddhism,” which preached “aris-



FIGURE 1. Unshō divides up the Shingon sect.

ocratic Buddhism” and “superstition,” was also taking shape.<sup>8</sup> The next section will discuss how this image developed within the New Buddhist movement.

*3. Narrating the Precepts at the Turn of the Century:  
New Buddhists' Discussions of Unshō*

In this section, I will examine an article titled “A Discussion of Shaku Unshō and the Dismissal of the Mejiro Faction’s Principles” (“Shaku unshō shi o ronji

8. While the image of Unshō as an “aristocratic” Buddhist can be found in accounts such as ANON (1897), my focal point lies in the transformation of the connotation of “aristocratic” from a virtuous monk who won the popularity of the upper echelons of society, to an image of a monk who skillfully exploited the upper-class to enrich himself.

mejiroha no shugi o haisu” 釈雲照氏を論じ目白派の主義を排す), written by KISSHŌZABUTSU 吉祥坐仏 (real name unknown) and published in *Shin bukkyō* (1902). I will examine as well as the article “The Last Luminary of Old Buddhism, Precept Master Unshō (“Kyūbukkyō saigo no kōmyō: Unshō rishī” 旧仏教最後の光明・雲照律師 (1912) by SAKAINO Kōyō, one of the leaders of the New Buddhist movement. The former was a direct criticism of Unshō published in *Shin Bukkyō*, while the latter was a critical biography published in *Taiyō* after Unshō’s death. As religious scholar Ōmi Toshihiro has pointed out, “in the extreme, [the New Buddhists] seemed to think that the existing temples and monks would eventually disappear,” and, from a completely lay-Buddhist-centered standpoint, developed a belief that monks were useless and unnecessary (ŌMI 2009, 29). In general, in the thick of the uproar over the so-called “meat consumption and clerical marriage” edict that continued to roil the world of Buddhism during the Meiji period, the New Buddhists stated a clear argument. The “old Buddhism” that suffered from the contradiction with the practice of the precepts would transform itself into a “New Buddhism” that did not separate monks and laity.

For example, in an article “A Discussion of Clerical Marriage” in *Shin Bukkyō*, the author GYŪSEN 牛涎 (1901; real name unknown) claimed that the Old Buddhists, while stubbornly adhering to the old forms and customs of their respective denomination, took the position of promoting “meat consumption and clerical marriages” for the convenience of proselytizing, which he denounced as “ugly remnants of the Old Buddhism” (GYŪSEN 1901). Against such a background, he said, “Marriage is the great path of humanity, and marriage between a man and a woman is a natural promise.” He affirmed meat-eating and marriage from the standpoint of the Great Way of Humanity, stating, “It should not be out of place to say that the precept of seeking true liberation by rejecting [marriage] is a morbid precept that comes from erroneous, fundamentalist thought.” He then makes the bold suggestion that the problem of “meat consumption and clerical marriage” is a problem that fundamentally exposes the contradictions in the system and the way of being of the old Buddhism, and that the problem of meat consumption and clerical marriage can be solved by overthrowing the old Buddhism and reaching the ultimate goal of the New Buddhism, which advocated “no separation of monasticism and laity” (*sōzoku mubetsu* 僧俗無別).<sup>9</sup>

9. “It is not until they attain a state in which there is no separation between laity and monks (*sōzoku mubetsu*), through [wearing] lay clothing and lay costumes and [practicing] meat consumption and clerical marriage, that there will be an opportunity for them to realize in stark relief that the doctrines of conventional Buddhism are world-renouncing, and to arouse their earnest intention to taste New Buddhism which is this-worldly (*gense shugi* 現世主義). Presum-

At the beginning of his essay, Kisshōzabutsu acknowledges Unshō's impact as "the current darling of the Buddhist world," yet then raises the question, "Should Unshō be called the representative of Meiji Buddhism, and is this really an honor in the history of Meiji Buddhism?" (KISSHŌZABUTSU 1902, 89). He then proceeds to explain that the rationale for the elimination of the Meiji faction led by Unshō resulted from "the enormous extent to which it spreads the poison of superstition throughout society, and obstructs the prospects of cultivating new religion, and places an obstacle in the progress of thought" (KISSHŌZABUTSU 1902, 89–90). Kisshōzabutsu stated that in addition to the premise that Unshō's moralism was pessimistic because it was based on the "Lesser Vehicle" (Skt. *Hīnayāna*, Jp. *shōjō* 小乘), that his ascetic life was unnatural and abnormal, and also that he lacked a systematic theory, the specific point of his criticism was that he was a monk of the Shingon sect, allegedly the most "superstitious" of all the sects to perform the esoteric incantations and prayers (*kaji kitō* 加持祈禱) ultimately disseminating the superstitions of the "old Buddhism" (KISSHŌZABUTSU 1902, 89). On the other hand, the discourse of such criticism can be found in the six major guiding principles of the New Buddhist movement in the abovementioned "Our Declaration."

In addition, what is noteworthy in Kisshōzabutsu's essay is his criticism of the distinction that should be made between Buddhist precepts and national morality. Specifically, he asserted that the Buddhist precepts are only "religious" regulations and that it is completely meaningless to link them to the remedy of "social" moral degeneration.<sup>10</sup> Kisshōzabutsu's view on the precepts is contrary to the way that Unshō and other Buddhists from the early to mid-Meiji period applied the precepts and morality in the framework of "national morality," and the New Buddhists treated them within the framework of religion, suggesting a new development in the ideas surrounding the precepts. In addition, in the traditional Buddhist practice of the "Threefold Training," which consists of precepts, meditation, and wisdom, Kisshōzabutsu understood "the so-called precepts as a passive means of externalization against meditation and wisdom." Therefore, according to him, it is precisely because of this external property that the precepts inevitably ossify into "formalism," which is not a reference to the consideration of the "inner conscience" or a "base in a spiritual function." In so doing, Kisshōzabutsu ascribed negative labels to the practice of the precepts

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ably, the current problem of meat consumption and clerical marriage truly constitute skillful means to disseminate New Buddhism" (GYŪSEN 1901, 521).

10. "The precepts in Buddhism are not something to name morality in the legitimate sense, do not have the nature to discipline the people's minds in society as the principles of general morality, and only religious regulations laid down to attain religious goals, so it is utterly meaningless to rescue the socially moral degenerations utilizing it" (KISSHŌZABUTSU 1902, 93).

because they are only concerned with adherence to the items set forth by the Buddha (KISSHŌZABUTSU 1902, 89).

Alternately, SAKAINO (1912) discusses the precepts mainly from the standpoint of social progress. Sakaino saw the emergence of Protestantism in place of the old Roman Catholicism, or rather, the emergence of Lutheranism which allows clerical marriage in place of Catholicism based on celibacy as a natural demand of the times. The Buddhist precepts would ultimately also decline, providing a rationale that that was the “global trend” (SAKAINO 1912, 173). It also should be pointed out that the idea of locating New Buddhism within the framework of the religious revolution and the old and new religions in Christianity was a logic commonly shared by the New Buddhists, who compared themselves to the “Puritans.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, Sakaino asserts that it is inevitable that the precepts, which are solemn and single-minded, “must give way to religion that takes into account the whole of human nature and emotions” from the viewpoint of “humanistic ethics” (SAKAINO 1912, 173). In line with this, he concludes that the “Ten Virtuous Precepts” advocated by Unshō cannot satisfy contemporary people as an ethical theory in light of current ethical views (SAKAINO 1912, 174).

In fact, as early as the beginning of the twentieth century, Sakaino had already made a similar argument (SAKAINO 1901, 588) in *Shin bukkyō*. In the article, he declares that the celibacy of the old Buddhism “goes against the progress of society,” and that “the world is increasingly demanding a healthy New Buddhism, and New Buddhism’s lack of a distinction between monks and laity, or the theory of no monks, is something that many in society are beginning to actualize” thus developing his argument in a framework of “social progress.” Furthermore, Sakaino stated that “the pessimism and supernaturalism of medieval Christianity gradually became worldliness and optimism as the world progressed, and new religion became a major force against old religion. This, however, was not corruption but rather a trend which represented the progress of humanity, definitively proving the truth of the no-monk theory.” Sakaino thus emphasized the progress of this trend and continued by asserting that the emergence of the “*upāsikā* sect, or denomination of lay practitioners” of Jōdo Shin Buddhism, or True Pure Land Buddhism, in the Japanese archipelago was a stage in this historical development (SAKAINO 1901, 588). In this way, Sakaino’s position, in common with both of these essays, regards the lack of practice of the precepts by the old Buddhists as a corruption, and drawing on this premise concluded that Unshō was the “Last Luminary of the Old Buddhists” (SAKAINO 1912, 174). Thus, even Sakaino, who from a socially progressive and human-

11. For instance, an editorial clarified the positionality of New Buddhists, saying that “when we say that we disregard old doctrine, old faith, and old institutions, it is just like Luther and Calvin denounced the Pope’s Catholicism” (SHIN BUKKYŌ SHI 1900b, 224).

centric standpoint predicted the elimination of precepts, had a complicated understanding of them.

Remarkably, even within the New Buddhists the attitude was not monolithic, as can be seen, for example, in the case of the Shingon monk Tōru Dōgen 融道玄 (1872–1918) who warned against a radical pace of change. Tōru pointed out that, despite the importance of the Threefold Training in Buddhism, “strict precepts, asceticism, and seclusion from the world” and “abandoning worldly affairs and indulging in Zen meditation and contemplation (*zazen kanpō* 座禪觀法) are not something we Buddhists agree with.” Against this backdrop, he raised the following direct questions concerning the ideological stance of New Buddhists, mentioning that the “New Buddhists,” who take a negative stance toward the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, and the Twelve Causal Paths, which are the fundamental principles of “primitive Buddhism,” “call themselves New Buddhists and bear themselves with the name Buddhism without doubting themselves. I don’t know, is there something that makes our faith Buddhism?” he asked, raising fundamental doubts about the ideological basis of the New Buddhism (TŌRU 1905, 542).

#### 4. *Shaku Unshō’s Refutation of New Buddhism: On Buddhist Reformation, Practice, and Belief*

As discussed in the previous section, the New Buddhists’ emerging criticism of Unshō and the precepts were grounded in a belief in the natural state of human beings and rejected extreme asceticism. A similar criticism of Unshō’s precept-centered ideas can be seen with journalist TAGUCHI Kikutei 田口掬汀 (1875–1943) whose article (1902) dismissed the strict adherence to the precepts as abnormal “asceticism” and “un-naturalism (*fushizenshugi* 不自然主義)” (TAGUCHI 1902, 148–53). Taguchi rejected the precepts as the most rudimentary stage of development in the history of religion, thus showing that these epistemological criticisms were not limited to the New Buddhists. In other words, during the Meiji period, as the popular phrase “Law of Heaven and Humanity” (*Tenri jindō* 天理人道) indicates, it was common to criticize the precepts from the perspective of essential human nature as an episteme and social evolution. In this section, I will examine Unshō’s position in response to the criticisms of the New Buddhists discussed above.

First, if we contrast the discourse of the New Buddhist critiques of the precepts discussed in the previous section with the position of Unshō in the same period, we find that he denounced the “corruption” of monasticism and planned to reform the organization of temples under the concept of “monastic gardens.” In addition, as can be seen in UNSHŌ (1901), he endeavored to transcend the denominational barriers in the name of “true Buddhism” from a



holistic viewpoint and seek an “authentic” monasticism modeled on the ancient monk-nun order (*sōniryō* 僧尼令) and the modes of monasticism of southern Buddhists, especially those in Ceylon (UNSHŌ 1901). This was the basis for his attempt to build a monastic order based on strict precepts and the Threefold Training.

It is easy to see from the articles in the *Jūzen hōkutsu* that Unshō was opposed to the Buddhist reformation movement that arose in the decade from 1900–1910. Unshō, for example, shows a certain understanding of the attempt to alter “morality” in line with the progress of the world and to transform “religion” into a “new religion” in line with the “spirit of the times,” yet expresses doubts about its foundations (UNSHŌ 1902b, 1). Here, Unshō emphasizes the fact that the “the essence of Śākyamuni’s teachings” (*kyōtai* 教体) is unchanging regardless of the passage of time, and aggressively attacked the idea of “reforming the essence of teachings” as an act of “The Heavenly Devil *pāpīyas*” (*tenma hajun* 天魔破旬) or “demonic followers” (*matō* 魔党; UNSHŌ 1902b, 1–2). The specifics of Unshō’s reforms can be found in the outline of the independence plan for Ninnaji Temple discussed above in section 2. As a reform plan, he proposed the emphasis on Chinese studies (*kangaku* 漢学) to cultivate the foundation for reading all the sutras, and as a general rule, a ceremony to take the tonsure should be held between the ages of sixteen or seventeen and twenty-one. He further proposed following the “Four Great Orthodox Theories (*shidaihakusetu* 四大白説)” and the “Six Harmonious Principles (*Rokuwakyō* 六和敬)” for practice, and for spiritual education following the *Catalog of the Threefold Training* (*Sangakuroku* 三学録), the *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya* (*Uburitsu* 有部律), as well as the *Yogācāra bhūmi śāstra* (*Yugaron* 瑜伽論). The “Four Great Orthodox Theories,” was used by Unshō as the slogan for his reformation and meant that only “scripture” should be the ultimate base of practice to ensure that monks would not be misled by the times (KUSANAGI 1913b, *shokanshū*, 370–73).<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, while acknowledging that “a religion that is incompatible with the science of today in the end cannot possibly control the world of modern thought,” Unshō states that, in relation to the theory of evolution, Buddhism “does not evolve in the same way as one climbs a ladder but evolves freely in accordance with the situation. That is, it has the nature to transform and appear all at once like the reflection of the shadow of a mirror.” In this way, Unshō sought to show the constancy of Buddhism by arguing that its essence was in a dimension which transcended progress (UNSHŌ 1902c, 1).

Like the New Buddhists, Unshō was also in agreement concerning the need to improve evil practices (*heifū* 弊風), which he described in terms of “wash-

12. On the “Four Great Orthodox Theories” which Unshō reiterated as a guiding principle in his Buddhist renovation, see UNSHŌ (1886).

ing” and “removing rust,” expressions which precluded any change to the core of Buddhism (UNSHŌ 1902c, 4). He described the following four examples of people in his time who “chatter about reform” but fall into “error and misunderstanding”: (1) those who “seek unnecessary protection and interference from authorities”; (2) those who “follow the example of the reformation of foreign religions and mistakenly fabricate new principles”; (3) those who “seek to master the truth of Buddhism by merely studying foreign studies”; and (4) those who “pointlessly feed on charity and the public good in this world, and without restraint seek to make it the keystone of religious reform.” Unshō regards these four types as opponents of “Buddha’s holy injunctions” (*Buddha no seikin* 仏陀の聖禁) and the “admonitions of the denominational founders” (*shūso no suikai* 宗祖の垂誡; UNSHŌ 1900, 2).

In this context, Unshō advocated the attainment of the highest level of enlightenment (*bodai* 菩提) through the elimination of the three poisons of greed, anger, and foolishness, which he felt to be the “great purpose of Buddhism.” According to Unshō, it was only through a life of reclusion (*tonsei* 遁世) following the exemplars Śākyamuni and Kūkai 空海 (774–835), as well as Zenmui Sanzō 善無畏三藏 (637–735), who renounced their wealth and nobility, that Buddhism had won the respect of the emperors and the public. Therefore, he denounced monks who consumed meat, took wives, and wore worldly clothing. In line with this, Unshō asserted that at the quintessence of the revival of Buddhism was resuscitating the elimination of the three poisons and the simultaneous practice of the Threefold Training, and went as far as accusing those who advocate another way to salvation as being the “followers of the heavenly demons” (*tenma gedō no tōryo* 天魔外道の党侶; UNSHŌ 1900, 7–8).

Also in *Shin Bukkyō*, Unshō attempted a rebuttal of an article by Murakami Senshō 村上專精 (1851–1929), one of the theoretical leaders of the New Buddhist movement, which appeared in UNSHŌ (1902a), in which young New Buddhists attempted to interview “senior figures in the field of religion” (TAKASHIMA 1903). In this writing, UNSHŌ refuted Murakami’s dismissal of esoteric incantations and prayers (*kaji kitō* 加持祈祷) as superstition in an essay (1900) as well as Murakami’s positioning of “faith” as something that transcends the realm of modern scholarship. Specifically, Murakami had written that, “I, myself, know that the establishment of faith that brings spiritual comfort is not something that can be achieved through academic research. We know that faith can be obtained by more than learning and understanding” (MURAKAMI 1902, 30–31).

Ōmi expressed a core shift in the late 1890s in religious discourse from “philosophy (*tetsugaku* 哲学)” to “experience (*taiken* 体験)” among young people known as “agonising youth (*hanmon seinen* 煩悶青年)” who were anguishing over issues of personal consciousness and the ego, which led to their growing concern over religiosity (ŌMI 2014, 56). From this period onward, the confessional issue

of individual “faith experience (*shinkō taiken* 信仰体験)” or “faith” (*shinkō* 信仰) occupied a central place in the narratives of the emerging young generation. It is noteworthy that the main point of contention raised by Unshō, regarded as representative of the “Old Buddhists,” centered on the concept of “faith” which the New Buddhists had made the core of their movement. In addition, as Hoshino Seiji has noted, the spread of modern academic discourse, which led to skepticism about religion, and the issue of the clash between education and religion, resulted in the widespread idea that the construction of the modern category of *shinkō* or “faith” in fact “transcended” modern science, while at the same time maintaining its integrity, thereby ending the conflict between the two.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast, Unshō criticizes the idea of dividing faith and theory as being in “the style of Western learning” by using a phrase from the *Daichido-ron* 大智度論 (The Treatise on the Great Virtue of Wisdom; Skt. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra*), that he often quoted: “One can enter the great ocean of the Dharma by the means of faith, and cross the sea by means of wisdom.” In this way, he criticizes the idea of separating faith and theory as “Western academic style” (UNSHŌ 1902a, 118).

Consequently, he emphasizes that faith and knowledge are one and the same, epitomized by “stages in the Buddhist Path of Faith, Understanding, Action, and Enlightenment” (*shin-kai-gyō-shō* 信解行証), which begins with faith, develops sequentially, and finally ends with enlightenment (UNSHŌ 1902a, 118). He also states that in the traditional practice of the Threefold Learning, precept-centeredness functions as the absolute foundation of “Meditation” and “Wisdom,” which can be contrasted with the argument of Kisshōzabutsu in the previous section. In this way, Unshō’s stance was formed from a practice-based Buddhist framework carried out by monastics. He believed that in Christianity, for example, the reason that faith and scholarship needed to be separated was that it is a doctrine that does not conform to logic, as can be seen in the discrepancy between the creation in the Bible and academic understanding. Thus, Unshō pointed out that there was no need for a “totally reason-oriented Buddhism.”

Murakami’s position was to harmonize “religion” with “modern knowledge,” which is primarily philosophy, while placing “faith” in a transcendental realm that cannot be captured by modern academic knowledge, in order to achieve coexistence between the two. On the other hand, in the case of Unshō, his

13. As Hoshino Seiji, who examined the theories of religion proposed by Buddhist intellectuals such as Inoue Enryō and Nakanishi Ushirō, together with Christian intellectuals in the late Meiji period, has pointed out, one of the defining features of their understandings of “religion” was the twofold attempts to emphasize integrity with “human wisdom,” while framing it in a transcendental category beyond “human wisdom” (HOSHINO 2012, 126–27). On the neologism of *shinkō* and its entanglement with the New Buddhist movement, see Wu (2020).

understanding of “knowledge” was based on sutra-oriented wisdom (Jp. *hannya* 般若; Skt. *prajñā*) in the traditional Buddhist sense. Despite this discrepancy, both were in agreement in terms of their aspiration to harmonize faith and scholarship. While Unshō, an old monk who built a solid foundation of Buddhist training in the late Edo period, attempted to return to the ideal past of the True Dharma based on the Threefold Training in which the revival of the precepts had a central position, the New Buddhists, many of whom received modern education in the 1880s, aimed for the radical reformation of Buddhism attuned to the dawn of the new era. In this regard, the clash of Unshō and the New Buddhists reflected the epistemological contestation over the meaning of knowledge, faith, religious decadence, and reformation, sharing a common awareness of the fundamental problems.

### Conclusion

In this article I have examined discussions of the precepts and Buddhist reformation within the thought of Shaku Unshō and the New Buddhists. Although it has rarely received much attention, in early postwar research on the “modernization” of Japanese Buddhism the precepts were presented as having a close relationship to Buddhism, despite the assumptions Japanese in the modern period witnessed the increasing deviation from the precepts. For example, Yoshida Kyūichi, who problematized the self-centered quality of the precepts, envisioned the process of the modernization of Buddhism as one in which the practice of the precepts overcame its backward nature, and developed into a socially oriented “New Precepts” (*shin kairitsu* 新戒律) which he coined as his unique analytic concept (YOSHIDA 1961). Ikeda Eishun 池田英俊 (1929–2004) and Kashiwahara Yūsen 柏原祐泉 (1916–2002), who are considered, along with Yoshida, to be the leading scholars of modern Japanese Buddhism, also spoke of modernization centered on the “spirit of self-discipline and autonomy” (*jikai jiritsu* 自戒自律) brought about by the Meiji Buddhists’ attempts to restore the precepts. Yoshida regarded the New Buddhist movement as the embodiment of the “new precepts,” while in the case of Ikeda and Kashiwahara, they saw the Seishinshugi movement led by Kiyozawa Manshi as the culmination of the spirit of self-discipline and autonomy. In this process, Unshō’s attempt to revive the precepts was positioned as a prelude to personal discipline lacking social orientation on the one hand, and spiritualism on the other.<sup>14</sup>

These scholars, who had direct experience of the Pacific War, attempted to reconstruct the “modernity” of Buddhism and open up new horizons as an

14. On the role of the precepts in the historiography of postwar scholars of modern Japanese Buddhism, see KAMEYAMA (2019).

antithesis to Buddhist devotion to nationalism, and its collaboration with the colonial administration and the war effort. Although the fact that their narratives and historiography are ultimately reduced to Seishinshugi and the New Buddhist movement raises fundamental issues to be reconsidered, if we take into account that the reiterated terms “new precepts” and “spirit of self-discipline and autonomy” are analytical terms that emerged from their awareness of these issues, it can be said that, within this political context, these pioneers of modern Japanese Buddhism used the issue of the precepts as a pretext or premise to depict what Buddhism should be (and should not be) in postwar Japanese society. In contrast, this article has focused on the specific modes of discourse of Unshō, the leader of the movement for the revival of the precepts, and his opponents, the New Buddhists.

This article has confirmed that although the New Buddhists rejected an uncritical reception of the traditional discipline of the precepts, through their efforts, it was modern narratives that emphasized the inner realm as “social evolution,” “inner conscience,” “spiritual function,” and “humanism” as *épistémè* constructed in modern Japan. Even within the Shingon sect within which Unshō was affiliated, Wada Shōkai 和田性海 (1879–1962), a member of the New Buddhist Fellowship Society who later became president of Kōyasan University and chief abbot of the Kōyasan Shingon sect, adopted this line of discourse. In his book, WADA (1923) singles out the ideas of precept-upholding monks such as Jiun and Unshō as examples, noting that the trend of the time was “humanity centric and devoted to humanism” (*ningen honi jindō raihai* 人間本位人道礼拝), and that “religions that focus on precepts are doomed to be destroyed” (WADA 1923, 7).

In general, Unshō’s ideas of the precepts were reimagined and foregrounded by the faithful practice of the Buddhist “scriptures” as expressed in the Four Great Orthodox Theories, reversing the clerical degeneration and retrieving the ideal age of the True Dharma. As Nishimura Ryō, who has contributed to a broad range of fields within the study of early modern and modern Japanese Buddhism, points out, the “orientation towards realizing the religious community (*kyōdan* 教団) of the time of Śākyamuni” through the practice of precepts and the study of scripture is one of the characteristics of the movement to revive the precepts initiated by Vinaya monks in the Edo period (NISHIMURA 2018, 62). Yet, it is also true that the ideas of Unshō, who positioned his own activities as the “True Dharma” movement following Jiun’s footsteps, can equally be seen as trying to cope with “modernity” based on his fundamentalist attitude to return to the “scriptures” and the “founders.” This is in contrast to the New Buddhists who, under the influence of “free inquiry,” and inspired by Unitarianism, adopted an attitude that emphasized a critical stance and “rationality” to adjust to the rapidly shifting modern settings surrounding Japanese Buddhism

while remaining connected to society. However, to dismiss Unshō's thought as a manifestation of "backwardness" or "pre-modernity" on the basis of the contrast between the two would mistakenly lead to an affirmation of the conventional modernist research attitude.

For example, the tendency to construct an evolutionary theory that harmonizes Buddhism with the materialistic understanding of evolution or the Spencian theory of religious evolution was seen in many Buddhists, exemplified by Inoue Enryō, who adopted "Suchness" and "Buddha-nature" as the source of his theory. Unshō also sought to provide apologetic discourses in order to avoid the contradiction between the theory of evolution and the immutability of the body of teachings by emphasizing the flexibility (*jizaisei* 自在性) of Buddhism. Furthermore, in response to the psychological theory that the barbaric and infantile conscience also develops in accordance with the progress of knowledge in the world, Unshō identifies conscience with Buddha-nature, and argues that conscience, which is "the good virtue of the mind possessed by mankind," does not change with the "discretion" or "persecution" of the period (UNSHŌ 1903, 19). In this way, he defends the unchanging nature of the teaching that "the Buddha is the founder, the Three Treasures of the Mahayana are the Teaching, and the pure practices of the tonsure, dyed robes, and precepts are the base of the religion" (UNSHŌ 1903, 22).

In this sense, Unshō's restorative or fundamentalist ideas constituted a reactionary approach to address the multifaceted challenges he and contemporary Buddhists faced as part of the modern religious dynamic on the Japanese archipelago. The basic stance of Unshō and the New Buddhists is that they both recognized the "corrupted" aspects surrounding the conventional Japanese Buddhist world and shared a common discursive style oriented to disassociate with it. In the case of Unshō, Buddhist practice is universally specified by the Buddha's intentions expressed in the sutras, and he aimed to return to the ideal "past" through fundamentalist and dogmatic ideas based on the practice of the precepts. The New Buddhists, on the other hand, from a lay-centered standpoint and grounded in the language of "free inquiry," sought to promote a radical Buddhist reform that would break down the temple organization and monastic system by reconstructing Buddhism in the "present." This conflict has been reinterpreted by the New Buddhists as a framework of "new and old" Buddhism, but we can state that the two reform movements described in this article both represent "Buddhist modernity."

(Translated by Bruce Grover)

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