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# Between Essence and Manifestation: Shōtoku Taishi and Shinran during the Fifteen-year War (1931-1945)

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## Between Essence and Manifestation: Shōtoku Taishi and Shinran during the Fifteen-year War (1931-1945)

The “modernization” of Japanese Buddhism cannot be fully understood without considering the historical development of Jōdo Shinshū, particularly since the late Edo period.<sup>1</sup> HAYASHI Makoto states that after the Meiji restoration, Shinshū “promptly began the work of creating a modern [religious] institution, with other sects following in its footsteps” (2002, 32). That is, the formation process of “Shin Modernism”<sup>2</sup> in its various facets overlaps to a great extent with the history of modern Japanese religion itself.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Galen AMSTUTZ has acknowledged this point in a recent article. He states, “[the Tokugawa period] was an era during which Shin was clearly one of the major growth phenomena of Japanese culture and was clearly laying groundwork for Meiji modernization, but both Japanese and non-Japanese historians (except for those more or less representing and specializing in ‘sect history’) have almost not been able to deal with it at all” (2009, 236).

<sup>2</sup> I borrow this useful expression from James C. DOBBINS. According to him, Shin Modernism “represents an idealized form of religion tailored to modern sensibilities, but it offers only a partial image of the practiced religion of Shinran’s day” (2004, 108). While Dobbins equates the rise of this “modernism” with the type of philosophical rendering that “pervade[s] Kiyozawa [Manshi]’s 清沢満之 [1863-1903] writings and stand[s] in contrast to the Buddhist doctrinal terminology and mythic symbolism that dominated earlier Shin teachings” (2004, 112), Melissa CURLEY argues for the need of a distinction between “modernization” and “demythologization” (2009). On a different note, in recent years Ōmi Toshihiro has focused on the more “practical” aspect of the question, attempting to understand Shin Modernism through an analysis of the “missionary strategies” of Chikazumi Jōkan 近角常観 (1870-1941). According to ŌMI 2011, this Shin priest based his social activities on a Christian model, adapting the *practice* of True Pure Land teachings to the realities of urban society.

<sup>3</sup> For instance in his most recent work, SHIMAZONO Susumu emphasizes the role of Shin Buddhist thought in the formation and establishment of State Shinto (2010, 2-7).

In recent years, there has been a thorough re-examination of the traditional narratives of modern Japanese Buddhism,<sup>4</sup> during which some scholars have engaged in an effort to reassess Shinshū's role within the overall context of Japanese modern history without falling into the trap of a Shinshū-centric view of history.<sup>5</sup> However, it is obviously no easy task to “objectively” explain Shinshū's position as “forerunner” of modernity without appealing to some essentialist characteristic of Shinran's thought. In any case, we could say that a critical reconsideration of the areas in which Shinshū is regarded as the vanguard of modernity might be an effective point at which to start. Previously, I have explored the role played by Shin clerics in the establishment of the academic study of Buddhism in modern Japan (see KLAUTAU 2010). In this paper, I intend to focus on perspectives connecting Shōtoku Taishi and Shinran developed within academic circles in the context of the “Fifteen-year War” (1931-1945). I will concentrate mainly on the work of Hanayama Shinshō 花山信勝 (1898-1995), a professor at the Department of Indian Philosophy at Tokyo (Imperial) University.

As for Shōtoku Taishi, the role he plays in Shin Buddhism is well known: any student taking her or his first steps into the world of Jōdo Shinshū teachings would be able to cite Shinran's dream and hymns about the prince. Despite the fact that both the content of the founder's dream and the authorship of the works on Shōtoku Taishi have been a topic for discussion and disputes by modern historiography,<sup>6</sup> one cannot deny that devotion to the prince has been a constant, albeit understudied, element in Shin Buddhist history. After the Meiji restoration, Shōtoku Taishi gained a new significance not only for the True Pure land sects, but for the Japanese Buddhist world as a whole.<sup>7</sup> With the new position attributed to the Emperor, rhetoric connecting the prince's teachings and sectarian founders became increasingly

<sup>4</sup> By “traditional narratives” I mean the works of Ikeda Eishun 池田英俊 (1929-2004), Yoshida Kyūichi 吉田久一 (1915-2005) and Kashiwahara Yūsen 柏原祐泉 (1916-2003), the so-called “three pillars” of research on Japanese modern Buddhism. The ongoing critical examination of their works is spearheaded mainly by two scholars, Hayashi Makoto and Ōtani Eiichi, both central figures in the Society for the Study of Modern Japanese Buddhist History (*Nihon kindai bukkyōshi kenkyūkai* 日本近代仏教史研究会). See HAYASHI 2005, 2009, 2011 and ŌTANI 2006, 201, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, at the 2010 meeting of the Association of Japanese Intellectual History (*Nihon shisōshi gakkai* 日本思想史学会) held at Okayama University, there was a panel session titled “Modern Buddhism and the problem of Shinshū” (*Kindai bukkyō to Shinshū no mondai* 近代仏教と真宗の問題), which dealt specifically with that question. For an overview of the discussion, see KLAUTAU 2011.

<sup>6</sup> For an overview of the discrepancies in the records of Shinran's dream(s) and his dreams in general, see DOB-BINS 1989, 22-24. The meaning of Shōtoku's worship in early Shinshū is thoroughly analyzed in LEE 2007. However, this work focuses on the ramifications of *Taishi Shinkō* 太子信仰 in Shinran and close to nothing is said about later periods. On the other hand, in a recent article ENDŌ Mihoko questions the very authorship of works such as *Kōtaishi Shōtoku Hōsan* 皇太子聖德奉讃, inquiring to what extent “Shinran himself actually worshipped Shōtoku Taishi” (2008, 36 ff).

<sup>7</sup> This is clear, for instance, in the rhetoric of the *Shoshū Dōtoku Kaimei* 諸宗同徳会盟 (“Alliance of Sects for Ethical Standards”), founded in 1869. See KLAUTAU 2012b, 203.

common over time. This can be observed, for example, in Murakami Senshō's 村上専精 (1851-1929) late Meiji period essays<sup>8</sup> and in Takakusu Junjirō's 高楠順次郎 (1866-1945) Taishō period works.<sup>9</sup>

However, as one could imagine, the prevalence of ultra-nationalist intellectual trends in the 1930s created an increasing demand for essentialist discourses on “Japanese Buddhism”, whose fundamental storyline was, *mutatis mutandi*, the type of rhetoric described above. In such discourses Shinran was given a unique position, as we will see below.

### *The Quest for “Japanese Spirit” and the Kokutai no Hongi (1937)*

A few months after the Mukden Incident in 1931, the puppet state of Manchukuo was established and recognized by Japan. However, when the League of Nations declared that Manchuria still rightfully belonged to China, Japan was then “forced” in March 1933 to resign from this organization. Internally, party politics had more or less met its demise after the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi 犬養毅 in March 1932. Approximately a year later the Japanese Ministry of Education founded the Center for the Study of National Spirit and Culture (*Kokumin seishin bunka kenkyūjo* 国民精神文化研究所), investing like never before in the development of patriotic education. Japan had entered a new ultra-nationalist period.

In an overall sense, discussions on the nature of the “national entity” (*kokutai* 国体) of Japan became more and more frequent during this period, especially after 1933. However, as KONNO Nobuyuki has pointed out, the “very prevalence of discussions about the *kokutai* reflected skepticism toward the very basis of such an entity” (2008, 8). It was in this context in 1937 that the Japanese Ministry of Education published the *Kokutai no hongī* 国体の本義 (“Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan”),<sup>10</sup> a work supposed to put an end to discussions about the national character that were thought by government bureaucrats to be unsound reasoning (KONNO 2008, 6-7). The *Kokutai no hongī* was written by several scholars, but none of their names appear in the volume: the authorship was attributed solely to the Ministry of Education.

<sup>8</sup> This tendency becomes all the more evident in Murakami's works published after the Russo-Japanese war. For further reference, see KLAUTAU 2012b, 105-107.

<sup>9</sup> Regarding Takakusu's understanding of Japanese Buddhism and its “civic role”, refer to KLAUTAU 2012b, 120-140 (see especially pp.130 ff. for his perspective on Taishi and Shinran).

<sup>10</sup> According to the reference data printed in the end of book, the *Kokutai no Hongi* was published in March 30, 1937, but it was, in reality, not released until mid-April (HASEGAWA 2008, 77). As for its actual author, it is said that Hisamatsu Sen'ichi 久松潜一 (1894-1976) was requested at first, but that it was Shida Nobuyoshi 志田延義 (1906-2003), with the help of *Kokumin seishin bunka kenkyūjo* scholars, who in fact authored it (SAKURAI 2001, 117; HASEGAWA 2008, 77). For an assessment on the *Kokutai no Hongi*'s editorial process, as well as the *wa no seishin* 和の精神 ideology that supposedly provided the book's basis, see AJISAKA 1991.

YONETANI Masafumi defines the *Kokutai no hongî* as a “public text” (*kōteki tekisuto* 公的テキスト) whose basic intent “was to aggregate and synthesize theories on imperial sovereignty, national morality, unity of rites and rule, and direct imperial rule, thus attempting to center the source of the legitimacy of the modern Emperor around the *Tenson Kōrin* 天孫降臨 (“Descent of the Heavenly Grandchild”) decree presented in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* myths” (1996, 180). Therefore, one of the main purposes of the *Kokutai no hongî* was to describe how the immutable Japanese character “manifested” (*kengen* 顕現) itself through time in concrete terms. The historical development of Buddhism specific to the archipelago is also, not surprisingly, regarded as a “manifestation” of the “Japanese” spirit. According to the author(s) of the *Kokutai no hongî*, the Imperial Edict (*mikotonori* 詔) calling for the “promotion of the Three Treasures” (*Sanbō no kōryū* 三宝の興隆) that was issued during Shōtoku’s reign represented the “spirit” of Buddhism’s early transmission to Japan (MONBUSHŌ 1937, 112). Furthermore, they claimed, this “spirit” was later embodied in the southern Nara schools and, after that, in the new sects of the Heian and Kamakura periods.

Therefore, the character of each and every school of Buddhism in Japan acquires significance in the *Kokutai* context to the extent that they manifest the initial “spirit” of Shōtoku Taishi’s era (MONBUSHŌ 1937, 113-114). That is, such spirit would represent the fundamental *essence* upon which all subsequent sectarian founders worthy of the name of “Japanese Buddhists” based themselves on. Of course, the *Kokutai no hongî*, as one would expect, mentions only what we would call “eminent monks” (*kōsō* 高僧), and does not describe any instantiations of this immutable “spirit” following the rise of what we now call the “new Buddhism” of Kamakura. In this sense, the history of Japanese Buddhism as presented in the *Kokutai no hongî* is the path from the emergence of a quintessential “essence” in the beginning of the seventh century to its utmost manifestation in the life and works of the great masters of Kamakura, around six hundred years later.<sup>11</sup>

### *Buddhism and the Japanese Kokutai*

Between 1937 and 1945, over two million copies of the *Kokutai no hongî* were printed and distributed nationwide. However, four years after the publication of the former work, the Ministry of Education published the *Shinmin no michi* 臣民の道 (“The Way of the Subjects”). Unsatisfied with the results of the *Kokutai no hongî*, state ideologues asserted that people’s grasp of the *kokutai* remained too “abstract” (*kannenteki* 観念的) and its ideal was still “unrealized in people’s actual lives” (*seikatsu no jissai ni gugen serarezaru mono* 生活の実際に具現せられざるもの) (KYŌGAKU-KYOKU 1941, 2). The *Shinmin no michi* was thus intended to convert “natural” Japanese people into “true” Japanese people, who were fully aware of their

<sup>11</sup> In this context, post-Kamakura developments are basically ignored. This issue is closely related to the establishment of a discourse on the decadence of early modern Japanese Buddhism. See KLAUTAU 2008.



existence as imperial subjects, and thereby could proactively take part in the war effort (KONNO 2008, 187).

In any case, given the generalist nature of the *Kokutai no hongi* – the book covers a wide range of topics but only in passing – the newly created *Kyōgaku-kyoku* 教学局 (“Office for Educational Matters”) published the *Kokutai no hongi kaisetsu sōsho* 国体の本義解説叢書, a series of “official” interpretations of the particular subjects included in the *Kokutai no hongi*. Many renowned scholars of the day – such as Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之助 (1877-1955) and Kihira Tadayoshi 紀平正美 (1874-1949) – contributed with works on historical and philosophical topics, for instance. The writing of a volume dedicated to further clarifying the connection between Buddhism and the national Japanese essence was entrusted to Hanayama Shinshō, then assistant professor (*jokyōju* 助教授) at the Department of Indian Philosophy of Tokyo Imperial University.<sup>12</sup> Hanayama was a Jōdo Shinshū (Honganji branch) priest, and is known today less for his prewar scholarly works on Buddhism and more for his postwar role as chaplain to class “A” prisoners – including Tōjō Hideki 東條英機 (1884-1948) – at Sugamo prison. By the time the volume on Japanese Buddhism was published in 1942, Hanayama was already widely known in Japanese academia for his works on Shōtoku Taishi, some of which, if read with enough care, still remain valuable sources to this day. Even though his scholarship on the prince can be surmised as the main reason why he was put in charge of the volume, he also had to describe how that initial “essence” was later concretely manifested in the accomplishments of sectarian founders, thus connecting to the *kokutai* the practice of each and every contemporary Japanese Buddhist who claimed to live in accordance with the teachings of such “eminent monks” – or, better put, of a very specific image thereof.

*Nihon no bukkyō* 日本の仏教, Hanayama’s contribution to the *Kokutai no hongi kaisetsu sōsho* series, was finished in January 1942 (no later than a month after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor) and published in May of the same year. In this work, the author puts forward in a somewhat more concise format the same basic narrative he had been presenting since at least 1936 in works such as *Shōtoku taishi to nihon bunka* 聖徳太子と日本文化 (“Shōtoku Taishi and Japanese Culture”) and *Nihon bukkyō no tokushitsu* 日本仏教の特質 (“The distinctive features of Japanese Buddhism”).<sup>13</sup> The essential plot of these volumes does not change much: the history of Japanese Buddhism is, invariably, the path between Shōtoku Taishi and the great Kamakura masters. Note that Hanayama, following the *Kokutai no hongi* itself, utilizes the word *junka* 醇化 – an aesthetic term which simultaneously denotes refinement/purification and the elimination of non-essential elements – to speak of the development of Buddhism between these two points in history (HANAYAMA 1942, 21; hereafter cited by page number only).

<sup>12</sup> For further references on Hanayama, see KLAUTAU 2012b, 155-159.

<sup>13</sup> HANAYAMA 1936a and 1936b, respectively. For an expanded version of the argument presented in *Nihon no Bukkyō*, see HANAYAMA 1944.

*From Śākyamuni to Shōtoku Taishi, and Beyond: Hanayama's Nihon no Bukkyō (1942)*

It is with the historical Buddha's enlightenment that Hanayama begins his overall narrative of "Japanese Buddhism". In a few brief lines, he mentions the formation of the early Buddhist order, the schism between the Sthaviravāda (Jp. *Jōza-bu* 上座部) and Mahāsāṃghika (Jp. *Daishu-bu* 大衆部) schools, and the rise of the twenty schools of Nikāya Buddhism (Jp. *Nijū-bu no buha bukkō* 二十部の部派仏教).

However, according to Hanayama, Buddhism at this stage was still basically a religion of world-renunciation and self-perfection. It was at this point that a certain group began emphasizing "spiritualism" (*seishin-shugi* 精神主義) against the "formalism" (*keishiki-shugi* 形式主義) of precept-oriented practices, and diminished the latter by referring to them as "small" (*shōjō* 小乗) and "śrāvaka" (*shōmon* 声聞) vehicles. This group, represented mainly in the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sutra, became known as "greater" or "bodhisattva vehicle", but was still but *one* vehicle among three. It was as a further development of this group that the "single vehicle Mahāyāna" (*ichijō no daijō* 一乗の大乗) – represented in the Prajñāpāramitā, Flower Ornament, Lotus, Sukhāvātīvyūha, Śrīmālā and Nirvana sutras – finally came into being.

Here, Hanayama is obviously speaking of the formation of the "one Buddha vehicle" (Skt. *Ekayāna*), of which he clearly has a favorable opinion, for he adds that the "true spirit" (*shin seishin* 真精神) of the "greater vehicle" is indeed not in criticizing the practices of the "smaller vehicle" but in realizing that all sentient beings have equal opportunity of becoming Buddhas (pp. 18-19). However, despite having first appeared in India, this "true spirit" associated with the "one vehicle" doctrine was never fully realized in that country, due to both internal (the "rise of Hinduism") and external reasons (the "Muslim invasions"). Of course, in the first centuries C.E. Buddhism had already been transmitted to China, where a specific philosophical system based on the "single vehicle" sutras indeed took shape. Notwithstanding, Buddhism in China never really developed, at least in this first stage, beyond the "three vehicle" framework.

It was actually in Japan, with Shōtoku Taishi's commentaries on the Hokkekyō, Shōmangyō and Yuimagyō, that the "single vehicle" thought was first "sublimated" (*kōyō* 高揚). Here Hanayama emphasizes that, at the time the prince was lecturing on the three sutras, the "single vehicle" doctrine as later observed in Chinese Tiantai 天台 and Huayan 華嚴 schools had not yet systematically developed. Shōtoku Taishi abandoned the Abhidharma teachings that orientated much of Chinese Buddhist thought and, returning to the sutras themselves, upheld those which expounded the "single vehicle Mahāyāna". Therefore, "even though this was an inevitable result (*hitsuzen na kekka* 必然な結果) of Buddhist development in India and China, it would have been impossible without the prince's wisdom" (p.20).

Shōtoku's "single vehicle" was not "relative" (*sōtai* 相對) but ultimate, which, according to Hanayama, was appropriate for a nation like Japan: since all citizens have always revered the



emperor as “absolute” (*zettai* 絶対), it would have been difficult for people to successfully explain anything other than Shōtoku’s “absolute single vehicle doctrine” (*zettai ichijō no kyōhō* 絶対一乗の教法) (p.21). Japanese Buddhism’s later developments are thus all within this “single vehicle” basic framework expounded by Shōtoku. Besides Tendai and Shingon’s *ichijō kyōgaku*, Hanayama also mentions Hōnen’s *nenbutsu ichijō* 念仏一乗, Shinran’s *seigan ichijō* 誓願一乗, Dōgen’s *busshin ichijō* 仏心一乗, and Nichiren’s *honmon ichijō* 本門一乗 (p.24). This doctrinal “mold”, together with a strong “nation-protecting spirit” (*chingo kokka no seishin* 鎮護国家の精神),<sup>14</sup> would then provide the finest characteristics of “Japanese Buddhism” (p.26).

### “Practically” a Model: Hanayama’s Shinran

As emphasized above, Hanayama describes the history of Japanese Buddhism as the realization of Shōtoku’s doctrine throughout history, a process which ends with the rise of the likes of Hōnen in the Kamakura period. Of course, all sectarian founders have their place in the plot. However, when Hanayama defines “Japanese Buddhism” in terms of “practice” (*jissen* 実践), Shinran stands out.

According to Hanayama, the most peculiar characteristic of “Japanese Buddhism” in its practical sense is that both monk and layman share a single essence (*shinzoku ikkan* 真俗一貫). Based on the “single vehicle” spirit which denies all discrimination, “...‘Japanese Buddhism’ naturally abolished the separation between priests (*shukke* 出家) and laypeople (*zaikai* 在家), thus unfurling as ‘*shinzoku ikkan*’ Buddhism, which accepts no difference between men and women, rich and poor” (p.36). Hanayama further describes this element as follows:

Although people like Dōshō 道昭 [629-700], Gyōki 行基 [668-749], Saichō 最澄 [767-822], Kūkai 空海 [774-835], Chōgen 重源 [1121-1206], Eison 叡尊 [1201-1290] and Ninshō 忍性 [1217-1303] (...) diverged from the preceptor of Japan (*wakoku kyōshu* 和国教主) Shōtoku Taishi in terms of their monastic appearance (*shukke shamon taru sō* 出家沙門たる相), in terms of their practice of integrating the sacred [life of the monastic] and mundane [life of the layperson] (*shinzoku ikkan no gyō* 真俗一貫の行) we can say they all perfectly followed the great example of Shōtoku Taishi. It is not purely fortuitous that many of these monks of later generations were humbly revered as second comings of the Prince. Shinran in particular did not rely on the monastic aspect and, styling himself as neither monk nor layman, spread his faith and practice to the citizens; his tradition (*shūfū* 宗風) prospered greatly, and the Honganji institution achieved the grandeur we witness today (p.45, emphasis in original).

<sup>14</sup> See, for instance, p. 3. However, Hanayama asserts the “nation-protecting spirit” of Japanese Buddhists throughout the whole book (note that he devotes about half of *Nihon no Bukkyō* to speaking about the relation between “Buddhism” and the “Nation” – see pp. 53-92).

Despite the fact that Hanayama's work was intended as a general and, in a certain way, "impartial" description of the core characteristics of Buddhism in Japan, the "Honganji" is the only example of contemporary success mentioned. Of course, we could say that this passage is mainly a reflection of Hanayama's personal beliefs as a Shin priest,<sup>15</sup> but I believe the problem is somehow more complicated. By depicting Shinran's life and teachings as the clearest manifestation of Shōtoku Taishi's essence, Hanayama was not simply upholding his own faith but also providing a doctrinal foundation for aspects of Japanese Buddhism which lacked one, such as clerical marriage. When applied to the clergy in general, the *shinzoku ikkan* concept as utilized by Hanayama can be seen as just another way of describing "disregard for precepts", an element which to this day still makes its appearances in generalist characterizations of "Japanese Buddhism".<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, the *shinzoku ikkan* was a natural manifestation of the strictly egalitarian *ichijō* principle put forward by Shōtoku Taishi. In Hanayama's narrative, the "single vehicle" is always associated with values considered extremely positive in wartime Japan (and even today), such as "spiritualism", "ordinary people", "altruism", etc. On the other hand, other "vehicles" and practices are "formalistic", "individualistic", "discriminatory", etc, in such a way that one is clearly led to conclude that Buddhism as manifested throughout Japanese history is perhaps the one true way to practice that religion. See, for instance, the passage below:

[In Japan,] the Buddhism of mountains, forests and caves became the Buddhism of cities and villages, the Buddhism of monks and saints became the Buddhism of lay and ordinary people, and the Buddhism of scholarship and cultivation was simplified (*heiika* 平易化). In this way, it became the Buddhism found in the everyday lives of the people (p.36).

It is interesting that, during the Fifteen-year war, critiques of contemporary Buddhism – already a "tradition" at least since the Meiji Restoration – gave way to an extremely positive attitude toward the current state of affairs. Moreover, it is also important that Shinran's "neither monk nor layman" attitude is no longer regarded as an *exception*, but as the moment in which Japanese Buddhism completely assumed its own full nature and potential.

### *Concluding remarks*

Hanayama was by no means alone in desire to connect Shōtoku Taishi and Shinran. If anything, linking these two characters was a "trend" during the second decade of the Shōwa pe-

<sup>15</sup> At the time, Hanayama was but one in a long line of Shin clerics who held teaching positions in Buddhist studies at Tokyo (Imperial) University between 1879 and 1945, and therefore heir to a tradition which tended, within the public context of "Indian Philosophy", to sometimes emphasize aspects of Shin Buddhism (see KLAUTAU 2010).

<sup>16</sup> See for instance MATSUO 2002, 16-17.

riod. Miyamoto Shōson 宮本正尊 (1893-1983), Hanayama's colleague at Tokyo Imperial University and himself an Ōtani branch priest, put forward a similar narrative in some of his late 1930s works.<sup>17</sup> Ōtani branch priest Kaneko Daiei 金子大栄 (1881-1976), who was excommunicated in 1928 due to his “unorthodox” positions regarding the reality of the Pure Land (he would be reinstated in 1942)<sup>18</sup> and who worked, for a time, as researcher at the Center for the Study of National Spirit and Culture, expresses a similar position in several of his works.<sup>19</sup> Poet and thinker Mitsui Kōshi 三井甲之 (1883-1953), known today as the founder of the right-wing group *Genri Nipponsha* 原理日本社 (“Fundamental Japan Society”), also draws from the Shōtoku/Shinran connection in order to emphasize the latter’s “universal” character.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps it is even more interesting to note that in his prewar works, Nobel peace prize nominee and liberal historian Ienaga Saburō 家永三郎 (1913-2002), also depicts Shōtoku Taishi and Shinran as inevitably connected in intellectual terms (IENAGA 1997). Ienaga, despite different aims and perspective, ends up reproducing many common points of the above-explained rhetoric (e.g. Chinese incapacity for understanding the true universal elements associated with Buddhism), of which the most important is perhaps the narrative’s structure itself (KLAUTAU 2012b, 159-163). In other words, Ienaga also utilizes the Shōtoku/Shinran connection as a framework for explicating the reception and establishment of “universal” thought in Japan.

However, as one would expect, upon Japan’s defeat in World War II the above-described framework loses its place within the intellectual mainstream.<sup>21</sup> As had happened to the bulk of prewar *kokutai* theories, narratives on “Japanese Buddhism” such as those put forward by

<sup>17</sup> For an overview on Miyamoto’s scholarship and its implications, see KLAUTAU 2012a.

<sup>18</sup> See, for further reference, NAKAJIMA 1989 and MIHARU 1990. See also WARD 2004 for a contextualization of the issue of True Pure Land “orthodoxy” in the framework of modern Japanese Buddhism.

<sup>19</sup> In KANEKO 1935a (pp.52-53), the author mentions that Shinran is the individual who, throughout Japanese history, most clearly expressed (*hyōhaku* 表白) Shōtoku Taishi’s spirit. For his understanding of (Japanese) Buddhism during this period, see KANEKO 1935b, 1939 and 1940. There has been, to my knowledge, no thorough attempt to understand Kaneko’s ideas on “Japanese Buddhism” within the overall discursive matrix of the period, though Chapter 6 of KONDŌ 2013 might be considered a helpful assessment in this regard. His sectarian reformist activities have, however, received a fair amount of attention from the viewpoint of “doctrinal history” (*kyōgakushi* 教学史). See, for instance, MIZUSHIMA 2010 (Chap.3, especially pp.297-346).

<sup>20</sup> On the Shōtoku Taishi/Shinran Shōnin connection as expounded by this author, see MITSUI 1943, 12-25. For an assessment on Mitsui’s understanding of Shinran, see ISHII 2002. KONNO 2008 (pp. 275-307) provides somewhat up-to-date bibliographical information on Mitsui, while describing the postwar developments of his thought.

<sup>21</sup> Hanayama, for instance, never returned to his war-period theories on “Japanese Buddhism”. In fact, he did not even publish that much more on Shōtoku Taishi, which was his primary research topic to begin with. Despite remaining in his position at the University of Tokyo until his retirement in 1959, Hanayama seems to have prioritized missionary over academic work in his postwar career, serving first as chaplain at the Sugamo Prison and then, years later, as head (*sōchō* 総長) of the Buddhist Churches of America, the United States branch of the Nishi Honganji.

Hanayama did not come under any sort of scrutiny, but were simply laid aside.<sup>22</sup> In other words, with the postwar suppression of *kokutai* discourses, the “from Taishi to Kamakura” plot is no longer seen as an academically valid way to describe the whole of Japanese Buddhism. Instead, historical narratives mainly centered on the likes of Hōnen and Shinran became mainstream. These sectarian founders, in turn, were no longer depicted in light of their “aristocratic” or “nation-protecting” aspects (as we see in Hanayama or Mitsui), but of their “popular” (in the Marxist sense of the word) or “revolutionary” character.<sup>23</sup>

Of course, research focusing on Shōtoku Taishi does continue, though recontextualized in the “democratic” framework of postwar Japan.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, postwar scholarship on Shinran starts exactly with the denial of his nationalistic image as presented by *kokutai* ideologues. Ienaga Saburō – who stands out among the thinkers of wartime Japan for his unique way of connecting Shōtoku and Shinran – emphasizes in his very first work published after the defeat that, despite having so far focused on Ancient Buddhism, it was in fact Shinran he intended to understand all along.<sup>25</sup> It is as if Ienaga felt that Shōtoku was no longer a justifiable point of departure, and decided thereafter to assert the ground-breaking character of the Kamakura masters. Additionally, in a 1954 work on Shinran, Futaba Kenkō 二葉憲香 (1916-1995) begins his analysis of previous research with Hattori Shisō 服部之総 (1901-1956), thus choosing, at first glance, to ignore prewar scholarship on the subject (FUTABA 1954, 1-40).

Perhaps needless to say, Shinran’s thought was not a subject limited to Honganji scholars,

<sup>22</sup> Of course, as I have discussed in a previous paper, despite the laying aside of such “*kokutai* Buddhism” narratives themselves, their discursive framework did not simply disappear. What is more, I believe it was in the very restructuring of this framework that the postwar supremacy of the so-called “New Buddhism of Kamakura” (as put forward by the likes of Ienaga Saburō and Inoue Mitsusada) was established. For further details, see KLAUTAU 2012b, 163-169.

<sup>23</sup> SATŌ 2001 provides an overview of postwar research on medieval Buddhism. AKAMATSU 2004 is a survey of the developments (and predicaments) of historical research on Shinran in the same period.

<sup>24</sup> In postwar Japan, Shōtoku Taishi’s notion of *Wa* is reinterpreted to signify “peace” and “democracy”, keywords of the new era. Ishii Kōsei has provided interesting insights on the subject (see ISHII 2012). It is interesting to note the existence in Japanese academia of a strong group of scholars which asserts that the “Shōtoku Taishi” we know is but an invention of the *Nihon Shoki* editors. Spearheaded by Chuo University’s Ōyama Seiichi, the supporters of this theory claim that there existed, indeed, a “Prince Umayato” (*Umayato no Miko* 厩戸王), of whom it is impossible to gain any clear picture (see ŌYAMA 1999). YOSHIDA 2006 provides a fine English assessment on the subject. The above-mentioned Ishii Kōsei, though, strongly opposes Ōyama’s theories, asserting that the “deification” of Prince Umayato (and thus the path for him to become “Shōtoku Taishi”) started during his very lifetime. For his views on the topic see ISHII 2007a and 2007b. Ishii maintains a very didactic personal blog titled *Shōtoku Taishi Kenkyū no Saizensen* 聖徳太子研究の最前線 dedicated to introducing and reviewing recent bibliography on the prince. See <<http://blog.goo.ne.jp/kosei-gooblog>> (last accessed March 1, 2013).

<sup>25</sup> IENAGA 1947, “preface” (*jo* 序). Note that in the introduction to his *Jōdai bukkyō shisōshi* 上代仏教思想史, published but a few months after the outbreak of the Pacific War, Ienaga asserts that it was after reading the *Tannishō* 歎異抄 that he decided to pursue research on Japanese Buddhism. See IENAGA 1942, “author’s preface” (*jijo* 自序), 1.

nor were the activities of men like Kaneko Daiei limited to institutional reform. Likewise, historians of modern Japanese Buddhism often focus on issues surrounding the political role of Jōdo Shinshū, but sometimes without properly acknowledging the intellectual and doctrinal background that shaped them. This paper was, in this sense, a modest attempt to search for a “middle path” between these two worlds, or still, a reminder of the benefits that the “deregalization” of research on post-Meiji Shinshū might bring to both worlds of “doctrinal studies” (*kyōgaku* 教学) and “modern history” (*kindai shigaku* 近代史学).

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