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Nationalizing the Dharma:
Takakusu Junjirō and the Politics of Buddhist Scholarship in Early Twentieth-Century Japan**

The Tokyo Imperial University professor Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 (1866-1945) is today best known as one of the chief editors of the Taishō Tripitaka, the most frequently cited modern edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon. While the role of Takakusu in this enterprise is relatively well-known, his normative projects regarding the proper relationship between Buddhism and the Japanese state remain virtually unexamined. This paper will broadly introduce Takakusu and his work, exploring the context of his early scholarship in order to consider the way modern Buddhist Studies in Japan emerged in part as a discourse centered on civic duty and social responsibility. After a providing a brief biographical overview, I will discuss Takakusu's idealized views of "Buddhist citizenry," and consider his engagement in debates on the role of "family" in national life. In doing so, this paper intends to show that Takakusu's legacy was not limited to the sphere of philological criticism, but that it also had a lasting influence in presenting Buddhism as a powerful force in the consolidation of the Japanese Empire.

Keywords: Takakusu Junjirō – Buddhist Studies – Japanese Nationalism

Buddhism was first taught in the framework of modern Japanese academia at Tokyo University in 1879, only two years after the school was established.[1] Katō Hiroyuki 加藤弘之 (1836-1916), the university's first president, deemed it appropriate to offer classes not only on the "scientific" knowledge associated with

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Western scholarship, but also on "Eastern" subjects which had, from the perspective of Katō and many of his contemporaries, functioned as a platform for the cultural development of nations such as Japan.[2]

In this context, a small number of Japanese intellectuals were charged with the responsibility of lecturing on, for instance, Confucian philosophy and Buddhist texts. The latter was assigned to Hara Tanzan 原坦山 (1819-1892), a Sōtō Zen priest who, despite a keen interest in the study of things "Western," had in fact no training in European languages or philosophy.[3] In 1881 Tanzan was joined by Yoshitani Kakuju 吉谷覚寿 (1843-1914), who was in turn replaced in 1890 by Murakami Senshō 村上専精 (1851-1929).[4] Along with Maeda Eun 前田慧雲 (1855-1930), Murakami would deeply influence a whole generation of scholars of Buddhism. These individuals, under whom the academic discipline of Buddhism came to be practiced in an independent department,[5] had no experience studying overseas and, despite their vast knowledge of Sino-Japanese sources, had no proficiency in canonical languages such as Sanskrit and Pali. While during the mid-1880s Nanjō Bun'yū 南条文雄 (1849-1927), a Shin Buddhist cleric who had studied under Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900), did teach Sanskrit as part-time lecturer, he soon resigned in order to assume an administrative position in his sect, leaving no disciples of note at Tokyo (Imperial) University.[6]

The academic discipline of Buddhist Studies is often depicted in terms of its philological character, and while this might hold true for descriptions of the field as it developed in Anglophone countries, up until the first decade of the twentieth century the study of Buddhism in Japan was still dominated by a very different kind of textual scholarship. While many scholars today think the discipline of Buddhist Studies in Japan was established by basically transposing a field which already existed in European academia, at least until the early twentieth century Japanese Buddhist scholarship was ruled by its own set of methods, which in some cases can be traced back to the scholastic traditions of the Tokugawa Period (1600-1868). (This is not to say, of course, that scholars in Japan were not considerably influenced

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1.   For an overview see, for instance, Sueki 2011.

2.   See Hayashi 2002: 33-35 and Sueki 2004: 218. Kimura 2002 also speculates to an extent on Katō's motivations.

3.   On Hara Tanzan, see Klautau 2012: 55-81 and Yoshinaga 2006.

4.   For the role of both Yoshitani and Murakami in this early stage, see Klautau 2014. For further information on the latter, see also Klautau 2012: 83-117.

5.   For an institutional history of the department of Indian Philosophy (Buddhist Studies) at the University of Tokyo, see Tōkyō Daigaku Hyakunen Shi Henshū Iinkai 1986: 524-544.

6.   See Nanjō 1979 for a detailed autobiography. A few years after Nanjō quit Tokyo University, Karl Florenz (1865-1939), then professor of German and Linguistics at the institution, also started teaching Sanskrit occasionally (Tōkyō Daigaku Hyakunen Shi Henshū Iinkai 1986: 544-545).

by the views of their Western counterparts.) This context began to change, however, with the return from Europe of Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 (1866-1945), whose ideas will constitute the main topic of this paper.

Takakusu can, from several perspectives, be considered a turning point in the history of the study of Buddhism in Japan: having mastered several of the canonical languages of Buddhism and trained under specialists in England, France and Germany, he became one of the first Buddhist scholars in modern Japan who could not only understand the concerns of European orientalists but also respond to their interests, as demonstrated by the exhaustive editorial enterprise he embarked upon after returning to his home country. Between 1913 and 1921, he contributed to the publication of the voluminous *Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zensho* 大日本仏教全書 (Complete Buddhist Works of Great Japan), but it was for the equally massive *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大蔵経 (Taishō Tripiṭaka) that in 1929 he was awarded the prestigious Stanislas Julien Prize by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres of France, hence becoming the first Japanese scholar of Buddhism to be acknowledged in such fashion.[7]

Although his philological work came to attain a putative degree of objectivity, Takakusu also acted, throughout his entire career, as an energetic and outspoken intellectual who advocated for the public role of Buddhism in the context of Imperial Japan. In the following pages, after briefly exploring some key points in Takakusu's biography (especially those useful for understanding his later depictions of Buddhism as a force for national cohesion), this paper will focus on the contents of his *Bukkyō kokumin no risō* 仏教国民の理想 (The Ideal of a Buddhist Citizenry), published in 1916. This is one of the first of many works in which he emphasized the contributions Buddhism could make in terms of fostering national morality and evading the dangers of "materialism" and "individualism" brought about by the reception of concepts and social forces originating in Western civilization. I will then move on to consider his engagement in contemporary debates on the role of "family" in Japanese national life, and how that ultimately connected to his portrayal of Buddhism.

By contextualizing Takakusu's work in the increasingly polarized post-Russo-Japanese War ideological framework, my overall aim is to present a single – but nonetheless important – example of how Japanese scholars were committed to depicting Buddhism as a religion fit to serve as the spiritual backbone of a nation which, in Takakusu's eyes, was destined to figure prominently in the emergent world order.

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7.   Note that despite the considerable influence exerted by Takakusu over the area of Indian Philosophy/Buddhist Studies, for most of his career he actually belonged to the Department of Sanskrit Literature (*Bonbungaku* 梵文学). For an institutional history of this field at Tokyo (Imperial) University, see Tōkyō Daigaku Hyakunen Shi Henshū Iinkai 1986: 545.

1. *Takakusu Junjirō: A Biographical Sketch*

Takakusu was born Sawai Umetarō 沢井梅太郎 in 1866[8] to a devout Shin Buddhist family in the village of Yahata (part of present-day city of Mihara, Hiroshima Prefecture). He was a member of the first generation to graduate from the new kind of elementary schools that developed after the promulgation of the National Education Plan (*Gakusei* 学制) of 1872.[9] After working as a school teacher in Hiroshima, in 1885 he decided to continue his studies in Kyoto, where he entered the newly created *Futsū Kyokō* 普通教校, a normal school run by the Honganji branch of the Jōdo Shin sect.[10] While still in Hiroshima he replaced his given name Umetarō with Jun 洵 and shortly thereafter adopted the surname Kobayashi 小林. It is under this pen name, "Kobayashi Jun," that Takakusu would write several articles for *Hanseikai* Journal (*Hanseikai Zasshi* 反省会雑誌),[11] the eponymous Buddhist youth movement's periodical which would later develop into *Chūō Kōron* 中央公論, one of the most important literary magazines of modern Japan.

Upon graduating from Futsū Kyokō in 1889, the young Jun chose not to enter the then Imperial University in Tokyo, but to continue his studies abroad. However, he was unable to count on his family to pay his expenses, and, unlike some of his colleagues, he did not have enough connections to secure funding from the Honganji institution. Luckily, he was then introduced by Buddhist friends to Takakusu Magosaburō 高楠孫三郎, a Kobe entrepreneur and fellow Shin Buddhist devotee whose daughter, Sōko 霜子, was about to convert to Christianity. Believing that the twenty-two year old Sawai was the one who could convince his daughter to give up the idea, Magosaburō agreed to pay for his studies abroad on the condition that the

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8. For biographical information on Takakusu, I relied on Takagai 1957 and Musashino Joshi Daigaku Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo 1979.
9. Tanigawa 2009 discusses the educational context during the early Meiji period while focusing, albeit briefly, on the case of Takakusu (see especially 44-46).
10. On the context behind the opening of the Futsū Kyōkō, see Tanigawa 2008: 221-259.
11. Founded in 1886, Hanseikai is sometimes regarded in scholarship as "the first representative association of young Buddhist reformers," having "exercised a decisive influence on the various [contemporary] New Buddhist movements" (Thelle 1987: 201). While the group's name literally translates as "Association of Self-Reflection," the organization chose "The Temperance Association" as its official English designation. Indeed, its members were famous for their advocacy of teetotalism, which scholars surmise to have been adopted as an emulation of the practices of certain Christian groups, perceived by the group as symbols of "civilization" and "moral conduct" (Moriya 2005: 286).

young couple got married. Sawai Jun agreed and, taking his father-in-law's surname, also changed his personal name to something he believed was more adequate for a *muko yōshi* 婿養子, a man adopted into the family of his bride. [12]

Armed with a letter of recommendation from Nanjō Bun'yū, perhaps the only person he knew who had studied in England, Takakusu left Japan in 1890. A few months later, letter in hand, he knocked at the door of Friedrich Max Müller, his colleague's former advisor at the University of Oxford, to whom the document was addressed. Müller, already retired at the time, allegedly asked Takakusu: "Do you want to learn out of interest, or in order to make money?" Given his father-in-law's position, Takakusu had originally intended to study politics or economics in England, but unable to say that he was also interested in making money, he simply responded "out of interest" (*kyōmi no tame* 興味のため). To this, Müller replied, "If that's the case, then the area of Indology is formidable. If you want to do it, you begin by learning Sanskrit and Pali." (Takagai 1957: 28) He would do so under the direct guidance of Moriz Winternitz (1863-1937), a few years his senior, and who at the time was assisting Müller in preparing a new edition of the *Ṛg Veda*. In 1892 Takakusu was awarded a scholarship for Chinese language and literature (Foster 1893: 684), and received a Bachelor's degree in 1894. He then chose to travel through various learned centers in Europe: after some time in France, where he studied under Sylvain Lévi (1863-1935), he was awarded in early 1896 a doctorate by the University of Leipzig.[13] He returned to Japan the following year, when he started teaching linguistics at Tokyo University.

As a Japanese travelling throughout Western Europe exactly around the time of the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), Takakusu got to know firsthand the

Figure 1. Thirty-year old Takakusu in Germany (reproduced from Musashino Joshi Daigaku Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo 1979).

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12. The character *jun* 順, meaning "obey," was probably chosen for having the same pronunciation as 洵, the name Takakusu had utilized so far. The following character, *ji* 次, denotes the idea of next in a sequence, while *rō* 郎 is a common suffix for male names.

13. Though submitted at Leipzig, it was the University of Oxford that was responsible for printing the dissertation. See Takakusu 1896.

ideological effects of the "Yellow Peril" (or *gelbe Gefahr*, in German), an experience which greatly influenced his notions of East and West.[14] This racial metaphor, said to have been coined by Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859-1941) in September 1895 (Rupert 1911: 8), was popularized throughout the German Empire as a set with a very suggestive illustration by Hermann Knackfuß (1848-1915) entitled *Völker Europas, wahrt eure heiligsten Güter* (Peoples of Europe, Protect your Holiest Goods) [figure 2]. The basic concept behind the artwork was actually proposed by the Kaiser himself, who envisaged the final engraving as a present to his friend, Nicholas II of Russia (1868-1918). In a letter to the Czar, Wilhelm II asserts that the picture "shows the powers of Europe represented by their respective Genii called together by the Arch-Angel-Michael [*sic*], – sent from Heaven, – to *unite* in resisting the inroad of Buddhism, heathenism and barbarism for the Defence of the Cross" (Wilhelm II 1920: 19).

Furthermore, in the very same letter, the Kaiser places the illustration in the context of the Tripartite Intervention, when Germany, Russia, and France forced, through diplomatic means, Japan to relinquish the Liaodong Peninsula, which it

Figure 2. Völker Europas, wahrt eure heiligsten Güter (reproduced from Auffart 2002).

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14. Although in different ways, this experience may have been deepened by the fact that, coincidentally, Takakusu also spent the duration of Japan's first great twentieth-century armed conflict working as an official government envoy in Europe. Takausu left Japan on February 2 (only two days before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War) and returned two years later in February 1906.

had acquired from Qing China as per the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (this became, almost a decade later, one of the fundamental causes of the Russo-Japanese War). *Völker Europas* was first printed for wide circulation in November 1895 as a supplement for the *Leipziger Illustrierten* (Auffart 2002: 217), one of the main newspapers of the city where Takakusu had been awarded his doctoral degree just a few months earlier.

Years later, already in Tokyo, Takakusu would reminisce about Knackfuß's work, which he now understood as a metaphor for Japan's global mission. In the image, the Asiatic Powers are represented by a Buddha riding a misty dragon, upon which the European gods gazed from distance. While the dragon was an analogy for China, Japan was represented not by Amaterasu Ōmikami or Jinmu Tennō, but instead by a golden Buddha. Given the increasing popularity of Buddhism in late nineteenth-century Europe, this imagery provided Takakusu with the certainty that it was not only in terms of military power that the West feared Japan; it assured him of Buddhism's fundamental role in the global mission of the Empire (Takakusu 1916: 196-197).[15] *Bukkyō kokumin no risō*, the work on which we will focus hereafter, is one of his early attempts to systematize these ideas.

2. The Ideal of a Buddhist Citizenry

Bukkyō kokumin no risō was published by Heigo Press in 1916 [figure 3].[16] This is one of the first of Takakusu's many books intended for a general readership, in which he emphasizes the contributions Buddhism can make in terms of fostering national morality and evading the dangers of "materialism" and "individualism" brought about by the reception of concepts and social forces from Western civilization. The work is divided into three parts: "Kokumin to shūkyō" 国民と宗教 (Citizenry and Religion), originally published in 1909, "Bukkyō no chii" 仏教の地位 (The Status of Buddhism), published in 1915, and "Kushu jūdai" 久修十題 (Ten Topics for Experienced Practitioners), newly prepared for the volume.

Figure 3. Cover of *Bukkyō kokumin no risō* (National Diet Library, Japan)

The main purpose of *Bukkyō kokumin no risō* is to warn the "Japanese people" (*nihon kokumin* 日本国民) against the danger a "narrow Japanese spirit"
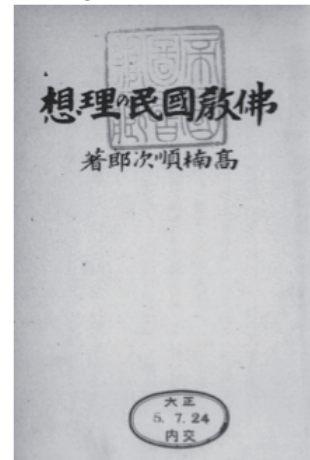
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15. Hereafter this work is cited by page number only.

16. Ran by Takashima Beihō 高嶋米峰 (1875-1949), Heigo Press was one of the most important Buddhist publishers of the time. See Ōtani 2010 and 2011.

(*henkyōteki na yamato damashii* 偏狭的な大和魂) poses in the promotion of the further development of "Japanese Civilization" (p. 3-4). For Takakusu, Japan had, through its victory in the Russo-Japanese War, more than sufficiently proved its "spiritual" (*seishinteki* 精神的) value and, in this regard, had nothing more to learn from the "West."[17] However, in domestic terms, in order to stimulate additional economic and social growth, Japan still had a lot to learn from the "material" (*busshitsuteki* 物質的) civilization of the West. That is, in this work, Takakusu intends to address the dilemma of how Japan, a "spiritual civilization" (*seishinteki bunmei* 精神的文明), could healthily absorb, without damaging its "moral nature" (*tokusei* 徳性), the "intellectual capacity" (*chinō* 智能) of Western "material civilization" (*busshitsuteki bunmei* 物質的文明)."[18]

According to Takakusu, absorbing a different culture was a serious task which could not be taken lightly, as the receiving party ran the risk of assimilating not only the virtues but also the shortcomings of the culture being absorbed. In the specific case of Japanese civilization, he understood its culture as being fundamentally opposed to that of Western countries, an opposition he described through dichotomies such as "spiritual" vs. "material," "family" vs. "individual," and "moral character" vs. "intellectual capacity." Here, he looks to Buddhism, or better put, *Japanese* Buddhism, as a means to handle such conflicting binaries.

For Takakusu, there was no difference in terms of "spirit" (*seishin* 精神) between the Japanese of the Nara (710-794) and Meiji (1868-1912) periods. He saw this inner strength as having been continuously based on the equally immutable Japanese family system (p. 102), of which "ancestor worship" (*sosenkyō* 祖先教) was an important historical expression dating from before the introduction of continental culture (*tairiku bunka* 大陸文化). In this sense, Takakusu claims that "familism" (*kazoku-shugi* 家族主義) historically served as a sort of compass which somehow

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17. On the construction of Takakusu's idea of "*tōzai* 東西" (East/West), see also Ogawara 2010.

18. As readers familiar with the intellectual history of the Tokugawa and Meiji periods will notice, this rhetoric is reminiscent of the *wakon yōsai* 和魂洋才 (Japanese Spirit, Western Technique) trope. That is, rather than simply adopting "Western" institutions and ideas, Japanese ideologues would argue for combining the parts of both societies they saw as superior. In the case of modern Japan, the main approach was to emphasize the adoption of Western "techniques" while maintaining the Japanese "spirit." While it is difficult to ascertain the term's first occurrence, as it draws from earlier *wakon kansai* 和魂漢才 (Japanese Spirit, Chinese Technique) discourses, from the Bakumatsu period onwards it became an increasingly popular device for framing – positively or otherwise – Japan's relationship vis-à-vis the "West." For an assessment in English focusing on Sakuma Shōzan 佐久間象山 (1811-1864), considered as one of the early proponents of this idea, see Sakamoto 2008. For a classic work on the topic, see Hirakawa 1971.

guided cultural reception in the Japanese archipelago. For instance, the Japanese absorbed the familial aspects of Confucianism, but rejected the idea of the Mandate of Heaven (Ch. *tiān mìng*, Jp. *tenmei* 天命), which postulates imperial deposition (pp. 103-106).

However, according to Takakusu, in contrast to the incomplete or imperfect "Japanization" (*nihonka* 日本化) of Confucianism, Buddhism was fully "Japanized." This process, says the author, was accelerated in the early eighth century around the time of Gyōki 行基 (668-749), whose activities helped solidify combinatory religious practices (*shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合) and connect Buddhism to ancestor faith. After this period, a "consciousness" (*jikaku* 自覚) that "ancestor religion" and Buddhism essentially do not conflict with each other arose, and was later perfected by the founders of what we would now call "New Kamakura Buddhism," in particular Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1263) (p. 108). At this point, Takakusu presents his own views on the development of Buddhism from India to Japan, where he also depicts the "Japanization" of Buddhism as a seven-hundred year process which began with Prince Shōtoku 聖徳 (574-622) and culminated in Shinran's attitude of discerning in both monk and layman the same essence (*shinzoku ikkan* 真俗一貫).

> It was Shinran Shōnin who turned [Buddhism] into a religion in complete harmony with Japanism (*nihon-shugi* 日本主義), where priests fully abandoned their old customs and, refining themselves into the national manners of Japan, responded to the needs of the Japanese national character. (…) Thus Buddhism was, from Shōtoku Taishi to Shinran Shōnin, fully Japanized. (…) Shinran Shōnin's True Pure Land School is (…) the conclusion of Buddhism's evolution in Japan. In the seven hundred years between the age of [Empress] Suiko [r. 593- 628] to the Kamakura Period [1185-1333], Buddhism became one with the Japanese national identity. In terms of both form and spirit, it completely assimilated with the Japanese national character. (p. 112)

Furthermore, according to Takakusu, the faith-based (*shinkō-shugi* 信仰主義) approach demonstrated by Shinran is also, as discussed below, essential for resolving the impasse brought by the clash between, for instance, "familism" and "individualism" (*kojin-shugi* 個人主義).

But then, how could this specific kind of faith preached by Shinran protect family-centered Japan from the shortcomings of the individualistic West? For Takakusu, the field of ethics (*rinri* 倫理) was responsible for reconciling people, but it was religion (*shūkyō* 宗教) that was responsible for connecting people and the absolute (p. 58). Based on that premise, Takakusu explains that there are four "gateways" (*kanmon* 関門) a person needs to go through in order to be able to call oneself a "Buddhist or a true follower of the teachings of Shinran Shōnin," namely, "family existence" (*kazokuteki seikatsu* 家族的生活), "social existence" (*shakaiteki*

seikatsu 社会的生活), "national existence" (*kokkateki seikatsu* 国家的生活) and, finally, "individual existence" (*kojinteki seikatsu* 個人的生活) (p. 234-239). Here, "family existence" is, in the case of Japan, the fundamental gateway that constitutes the basis for all others.

At this point, Takakusu warns his readers against the dangers of the fourth type of "existence" lapsing into "individualism." For Takakusu, appropriately fulfilling one's individual existence was, for the sake of family and nation, a *necessary* – though usually misunderstood – step. Risks connected to this individual "fulfillment" were fairly high, as it could easily turn into "individualism," "egoism" (*riko-shugi* 利己主義), or "naturalism" (*shizen-shugi* 自然主義). There was no possible way to avoid those pitfalls other than fully harmonizing this "individual existence" with a "religious" one (*kojinteki seikatsu to shūkyōteki seikatsu to ga zenzen icchi suru to iu koto no hoka ni michi wa nai* 個人的生活と宗教的生活とが全然一致すると云ふことの外に道はない) (p. 236). "For the Nation there is the sovereign, for society there is people, and for family there are the parents," says Takakusu, reminding us that there is, however, no "master" in terms of "individual existence" (p. 237). In order to solve this issue and avoid the dangers of individualism, he then proposes the following:

> Harmony between religious and individual existences is, therefore, [achieving] spiritual awakening (*reiteki jikaku* 霊的自覚). The greatest and most perfect awakening is of the type achieved through faith in the Absolute Other Power (*zettai tariki no shinkō* 絶対他力の信仰). Thus, acting as the Buddha acted and renouncing what he renounced: if one can live by the instructions of the Buddha and [under] his light, then all becomes a grateful existence (*hōon no seikatsu* 報恩の生活), that is, an existence of faith. This would create the basis for a spiritual education and, naturally, lead to a perfect undertaking of the national, family, and social existences (p.236-237).

That is, faith in the Other Power allows people to fulfill their individual lives without lapsing into "individualism," one of the foremost dangers brought by the contact with Western "material culture." In other words, this type of Buddhist faith constitutes, for Takakusu, the very moral foundation upon which Japan was to build its future vis-à-vis a materially powerful but spiritually weak West.

As seen above, while clearly influenced by his own personal True Pure Land faith, Takakusu's depiction of Buddhism as a mechanism for fostering "ideal" citizens is also heavily informed by the key role of "family" in national life. Indeed, besides the starting point for a fulfilling existence, the Japanese *kazoku* also functioned as the very filter through which the Dharma had truly "Japanized." In the following section, we will focus on contemporary debates on the issue of *kazoku-shugi*, in order to delineate how Takakusu's ideas relate to the wider intellectual context of late Meiji/Taishō Japan.

3. Kazoku Ideology in the 1910s: Some Contextual Remarks

The concept of *kazoku* as it appears in Takakusu's writings on "Japanese Buddhism" was by no means an isolated event in terms of intellectual history. On the contrary, he was quite in sympathy with contemporary debates on the subject and, as a public intellectual, even came to produce essays which dealt with the topic in a way not directly connected to religion. For instance in 1911, he contributed with a piece entitled "The Father/Child-centered Family" (*Fushi hon'i no kazoku* 父子本位の家族) to the edited volume *Kokumin kyōiku to kazoku seido* 国民教育と家族制度 (National Education and the Family System), which gathered essays from scholars of diverse areas as law, ethics, philosophy, and education. In the following year, he would publish a very similar essay in yet a different volume, titled *Sonnō aikoku ron* 尊王愛国論 (On Reverence for the Sovereign and Patriotism), which shows his continued interest on the subject (Takakusu 1911 and 1912).

In these papers, written in the same context as *Bukkyō kokumin no risō*, Takakusu identifies his usage of the term "family system" (*kazokusei* 家族制) with Inoue Tetsujirō's concept of "patriarchal system" (*kachō seido* 家長制度). While Western families were "transversal" (*yokoteki* 横的), in Japan due to their "father/child-centric" character they are peculiarly "vertical" (*tateteki* 縦的) (Takakusu 1912: 275). Also, unlike China, where the ruling system was informed by the notion of the "Mandate of Heaven," and despite similarities with Western countries, where "national and political sovereigns are the same," Japan was the only nation which had, from its beginning, been centralized on the same royal line. This shaped, in turn, a perfect unity between ruler and people (*kunmin itchi* 君民一致) (Takakusu 1911: 114), which is explained as follows:

> As the Sovereign House deems important its lineage, so do the Subjects theirs. The feeling of consideration for one's ancestors is the same for both Sovereign and Subject. As the line of the Sovereign Household is unbroken, so is that of the private household, or at least that is how we desire it to be. In sum, the "nation" develops upon this lineage-centered idea and, as the concept of a historical lineage burgeons, the notion of reverence for one's ancestors is naturally established (Takakusu 1911: 114-115).

It is, therefore, through the above process that the political idea of unity between ruler and people gave birth to the "family religion" (*kazokuteki shūkyō* 家族的宗教) of "ancestor worship."[19] For Takakusu, in order to achieve a moderate amount

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19. Sociologist Morioka Kiyomi considers Takakusu's "*fushi hon'i no kazoku*" as an early attempt to show, in a more structured manner, the relationship between "ancestor worship" and the "family-state ideology" (Morioka 1977: 191 fn.3). In a recent article, Toishiba Shiho also offers detailed explanation of how the academic concept of "ancestor worship," then usually applied to describe the situation of religion in ancient societies, was reformulated by the likes of legal scholar Hozumi Nobushige 穂積陳重 (1856-1926) in the context of "civilized" Meiji Japan (see Toishiba 2014).

of success, any type of educational proposal for the nation needs to consider this "family system" which constituted, according to him, the ethical threshold of Japan.

The above argument – as well as other similar contemporary discussions on the role of "family" in Japanese life – can be regarded as a continuation of the disputes on the Civil Code that had occupied Japanese intellectuals at least since the 1890s. Despite a number of changes (especially in the postwar period), the current Japanese Civil Code was issued in 1896, drafted under the influence of both German and French models, but especially the former. Its final version was reached as a compromise between a conservative faction, which espoused the family-state ideology (*kazoku kokka kan* 家族国家観), and a more liberal faction which criticized this view. However, both sides were left with a degree of frustration. According to cultural anthropologist Kuwayama Takami, this dissatisfaction with the Civil Code "erupted in the 1910s, [when] debates on the 'Household' System ('*ie*' *seido* 「家」制 度) escalated into a (…) revisionist movement" (2004: 224). He explains further:

> Japan, which had in the mid-nineteenth century been confronted with the threat of colonization, continued, even after the victories in the Sino- and Russo-Japanese wars, to adapt itself to a world-system essentially created by Europe and the United States. However, to the extent difficulties arose in this adaptation, the dangers – real or imagined – of Europe and America, as well as their moral decadence, were increasingly emphasized, while Japanese tradition, under the term "pristine morals" (*junpū bizoku* 淳風美俗), was praised and legitimized. (…) This romanticized Japanese tradition thus served to fuel nationalism among the people, inevitably leading to the exploration of a *sui generis* Japanese cultural identity, an attitude commonly manifested as counter-hegemonic discourses torward Europe and the United States. When we reflect upon the national polity theories (*kokutairon* 国体 論) from the mid-Meiji period onwards, we observe that Japanese familism is refined to a bizarre extent and counterposed to the individualism of Europe and the United States. This fact is evidence of how the "household" worked as Japanese symbol of cultural nationalism (Kuwayama 2004: 225).

Especially after the Russo-Japanese war, with the spread of urbanization and industrialization, the notion of "individual" also became, in socio-cultural terms, increasingly pronounced.[20] For those supportive of the family-state ideology, this was met with suspicion. In 1908, the second Katsura administration, out of a critical feeling towards the expansion of intellectual and political trends such as socialism, naturalism, and individualism, sought to reinforce by enacting the Boshin Edict (*Boshin shōsho* 戊辰詔書) the type of national morals presented in the 1890 Imperial Rescript of Education (*Kyōiku chokugo* 教育勅語). After Kōtoku Shūsui's 幸徳秋水 (1871-1911) "High Treason Incident," a failed socialist-anarchist

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20. For an overview of the establishment in Meiji Japan of the term *kojin* 個人 as a translation for "individual," see Saitō 1977: 229-249.

attempt to assassinate the Meiji Emperor in 1910, government ideologues such as Inoue Tetsujirō felt the need to establish even further the cornerstones of national morality (Reitan 2010: 114ff). In this very context, the type of *kazoku* depicted by government-related intellectuals such as Takakusu (who portrayed the common family as a microcosm of the Imperial Household) became increasingly postulated as a true symbol of Japan.

The "Family-State" envisaged by Takakusu is not, in this sense, different than the kind proposed by other contemporary scholars. What distinguishes him, however, is his attempt not only to move Buddhism into the picture, but also to bring this type of argument to the more limited context of this religion. The fact is, after Takakusu, Tokyo Imperial University scholars of Buddhist Studies would almost always discuss "Japanese Buddhism" in connection with this idealized concept of family.[21] In the process of becoming linked to the *ie*, itself a powerful national symbol, the discourse on "Japanese Buddhism" was, as can be clearly seen in Takakusu's ideas, ultimately sublimated into an expression of cultural nationalism.

4. In Closing: Buddhist Studies and Japan's Civilizing Mission

> We are the chosen people of Buddhism (*bukkyō no senmin* 仏教の選民). We must have an awareness that we are the people most befitted to it. Buddhism has not adapted to any other nations, and it is only Japan that truly keeps propagating it. We need, therefore, to bear in mind that we are the people chosen for spreading Buddhism's ideal throughout the world. (p. 212)

The above words from *Bukkyō kokumin no risō* capsulate quite well Takakusu's ambitions for Buddhism, both domestically and overseas. It was not just the case that Buddhism had naturally adapted to fit what he understood as the Japanese national character, but also that the Japanese, due to that very character, had got it right. In this context Buddhism is, then, not only a tool for nurturing true citizens, but also a useful framework within which to envisage Japan's civilizing mission in Asia.

After *Bukkyō kokumin no risō*, Takakusu continued, from his position as Professor at Tokyo Imperial University, to publish many other works in which he expounded similar ideas based on the Japan/West dichotomy I discussed above.[22]

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21. See, for instance, Klautau 2012: 149-176, or, for an assessment in English, Klautau 2013.

22. See Takakusu 1924, 1926, 1932, 1934, and 1946. Note that, except for the last work, all others were published by Daiyūkaku 大雄閣, a Tokyo-based publishing company run by Takakusu's own son Masao 正雄 (dates unknown). These are also listed in Stone 1990, which incidentally served as the original inspiration for my work on Takakusu.

Thereafter, he would increasingly emphasize (especially after the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese war in 1937) the part Japanese Buddhism was to play in the construction of a Pacific-centered "New Culture" (*shinbunka* 新文化). Indeed, he would do so up until his final work published in 1944, *Chishiki minzoku to shite no sumeru zoku* 知識民族としてのスメル族 (The Sumerians as an Intellectual People), where he claims a joint origin for the Japanese and the Sumerians. As most other cultures in Asia also originated there, Japan was then destined to represent the "East" and lead these peoples through the war (Takakusu 1944: *jobun* [preface]).

Although some postwar students of Takakusu's thought have, in my understanding, sometimes mistaken this idea of the construction of a new hybrid East/West Culture for a universalistic cry in an age of chauvinism,[23] I would argue quite the opposite. Takakusu's ideas are worth considering since it was due mostly to his work that departments of Buddhist Studies in Japan, then on a par with their Western counterparts in terms of sources and method, became a destination for Buddhists throughout Asia who sought to assess, through textual exegesis, the "true meaning" of their own traditions. Therefore it is, in a sense, precisely in connection with the intellectual construction of Japan as an Empire that we must address Takakusu's scholarly speculations on the role of Buddhism as a religion of political engagement.

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23. For instance, when focusing on "Shinbunka genri to shite no Bukkyō" 新文化原理 としての仏教 (Buddhism as the Principle of a New Culture), a lecture given in 1942 at Tohoku Imperial University (and published posthumously as Takakusu 1946), Hanayama Shōyū 花山勝友 (1931-1995) depicts his former professor as an insightful unversalist who sought to find the middle way between the extremes of both Eastern and Western cultures (1979: 51). Similarly, Undō Gidō 雲藤義道 saw Takakusu's proposal for the "unification of Eastern and Western thoughts" (*tōzai shichō goryū* 東 西思潮合流) as a sort of continuation of Prince Shōtoku's idea of "harmony" (*wa* 和), understanding it as a useful method for overcoming the impasses of contemporary society (Undō 1981: 196; see also Undō 1979). Needless to say, these are postwar modernist readings of Takakusu, which consider little his actual context. This rather positive interpretation of Takakusu as a "universalist" is in many senses also reinforced by the fact that he was, throughout the latter half of his life, an ardent proponent of Esperanto, the international auxiliary language proposed by L.L. Zamenhof (for a history of this linguistic movement in the Japanese context, see Rapley 2013). However, as seen above, Takakusu was actually closer to emphasizing Japan as the cradle of a new world order that would eventually overcome, at least in cultural terms, most of what came before it.

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