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Modern Japanese Buddhology: Its History and Problematics

by Minoru Kiyota

I. The Impact of 19th Century European Scholarship on Modern Buddhology

Buddhology, as we know it today, incorporates modern disciplines—philology, philosophy and history—and emphasizes a systematic approach in investigating the materials accumulated in Buddhist Asia during the past 2,500 years. Buddhology of this kind had its origin in Europe, particularly in 19th century England and France, the two major colonial powers in South and East Asia at that time. French rationalism in particular had considerable impact on the development of modern Buddhology.

European interest in Buddhism initially centered on Pāli and Sanskrit studies. Alexander Johnston published *The Sacred and Historical Work of Ceylon* in 1821, based on a translation of a Sinhalese book called *Rajavali*; Christian Lassen and Eugène Burnouf published the *Essai sur le Pāli* in 1826; and Robert Caesar Childers completed the *Dictionary on the Pāli Language* in 1875. Also, through the efforts of Thomas William Rhys Davids, the Pāli Text Society was established in 1881. He warrants special mention. As a young man, Rhys Davids went to Ceylon and became interested in Pāli Buddhism. On his return to England in 1876, he lectured on Pāli and Pāli Buddhism at London University and Manchester University, and published many works, such as *Buddhism* (1877), *Buddhist Birth Stories* (1880), *The Questions of King Milinda* (1890), etc.

Somewhat earlier, Brian Houghton Hodgson had published the “Notices of the Languages, Literature and Religion

of Nepal and Tibet," a wealth of Sanskrit materials he had accumulated in the course of many years, in *Asiatic Researches* in 1826, and thus made public these valuable materials for the systematic study of Buddhism. Eugène Burnouf, a gifted philologist, published the *Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme et le Lotus de la Bonne Loi* in 1844, based on the information derived from the Hodgson collection. This was the first historical treatment of Buddhism in modern times. Friedrich Max Müller, a student of Burnouf, following the philological and historical disciplines of his teacher, established the foundation of modern Sanskrit studies initiated by Hodgson and Burnouf. He taught linguistics and religion at Oxford University and published numerous works which still warrant respect today, such as: *Buddhism and Buddhist Pilgrims* (1857); *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* (1859); *Einleitung in die Vergleichende Religionswissenschaft* (1874); *Origin and Growth of Religion* (1878); *Dhammapada* (1881); *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* (1899); etc. But his greatest contribution was, of course, in compiling and editing the *Sacred Books of the East* (50 vols.) from 1879 to 1910.

Though the propelling forces which stimulated modern Buddhology were those men cited above, we cannot fail to honor the efforts of others. For example: Hermann Oldenberg, who published the *Dīpavaṃsa* (1879), *Vinaya Pīṭakam* (1880), *Buddha: sein leben, seine lehre, seine Gemeinde* (1881), *Theragāthā and Therīgāthā* (1883), etc.; Sylvain Lévi, who published the *Matériaux pour l'étude du système Vijñaptimātra* (1932), and who, together with Junjirō Takakusu and Paul Demiéville, directed the work on the *Hōbōgirin: Dictionnaire encyclopédique du bouddhisme d'après les sources chinoises et japonaises* (1929–37); and Louis de La Vallée Poussin, who published the *Madhyamakāvātara* (1907–1911), *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu* (1923–31), *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi, la Siddhi de Hiuan-Tsang* (1928–29), etc. In addition, Th. Stcherbatsky published the *Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word 'Dharma'* (1923), *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa* (1927), *Buddhist Logic* (1930–32), etc.; E. Obermiller published the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* (1929), *The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation* (1930), etc.; and Paul Demiéville, who took part in the *Hōbōgirin* project, published the *Historique du Système Vijñaptimātra* (1932), etc. These works analyzed Buddhist texts philologically and interpreted Bud-

dhist thought objectively. Modern Buddhology examines primary source materials, interprets those materials philosophically and places them in historical context.

II. Western Impact on the Development of Modern Japanese Buddhology

Though Western scholarship has played a dominant role in the development of modern Buddhology during the last 150 years, we cannot ignore the contributions of modern Japanese Buddhist scholarship today. Such scholarship had its beginning in the Meiji period in the late 19th century—the period of Japan's emergence as a modern state. Nationalism marked the spirit of the age, and in order to enhance national prestige the Japanese willingly accepted Western science, technology and scholarship. Students of Buddhism were no exception. Encouraged by the state, they went to the West to study. Historically, Nishi Hongan-ji, the headquarters of Shin Buddhism of the Western Branch, took the lead in encouraging students to study in Europe. In 1871, Buddhist elders, such as Mokurai Shimaji and Takuyū Umezawa, accompanied Tomomi Iwakura, the official Japanese emissary, on a tour of the West to investigate the state of religious studies there. Such reconnaissance missions were repeated by Japanese Buddhists in subsequent years. But foremost among the early Japanese students—who were sent to Europe and made a distinct impact on the development of modern Buddhology in Japan—were Bunyū Nanjio and Kenjiu Kasawara, students at Higashi Hongan-ji, the headquarters of Shin Buddhism of the Eastern Branch. They left Japan before the Iwakura mission, and studied Sanskrit in England under Max Müller. Kasawara later died of tuberculosis, and Max Müller wrote his obituary, which appeared in the *London Times* for September 22, 1883, under the byline "The Late Kenjiu Kasawara." Kasawara was probably one of Max Müller's most prized students, and the obituary gave him unstinting praise. But it was Nanjio, primarily known as the compiler of *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translations of the Buddhist Tripitaka, the Sacred Canon of Buddhists in China and*

Japan (1883), who introduced modern Sanskrit studies to Japan.¹

It might be of some interest to note here that Nishi Hongan-ji was created by Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1591 and Higashi Hongan-ji by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1602. The latter, patronized by the Tokugawas, prospered during the Tokugawa period. Hence, there was, apparently, a tacit agreement on the part of anti-Tokugawa Meiji leaders to patronize Nishi Hongan-ji after the Meiji restoration—for the Iwakura mission invited the elders of this establishment, not those of Higashi Hongan-ji, to accompany the mission.² The political advantages reaped by Nishi Hongan-ji at this time created a strong sense of dedication and purpose among their rivals, who were regarded as “rebels” by the Meiji leaders. Thus Nishi Hongan-ji and Higashi Hongan-ji, followed by the Takada branch of Shin Buddhism, emerged as keen competitors in the Meiji modernization program, trailed by other Buddhist schools. To many Buddhist leaders, modernization meant exposure to modern European scholarship.

Nishi Hongan-ji sent Takutsū Fujieda and Ryōen Fujishima to France, and Ryōho Suga to England in 1882. Fujieda studied under Sylvain Lévi. Fujishima published *Le Bouddhisme Japonais* (1889), the first work on Japanese Buddhism published in a Western language. Suga studied Sanskrit together with Nanjio under Max Müller, but, unlike Nanjio, he also took an interest in Western philosophy and ethics. In addition, Gyōyū Tokiwai of the Takada branch of Shin Buddhism left Japan in 1886 and studied in Germany; Junjirō Takakusu of Nishi Hongan-ji—who delivered a series of lectures at the University of Hawaii just prior to the outbreak of World War II—left Japan in 1890 and studied Sanskrit, Tibetan and Indian philosophy in England, Germany and France. All of them returned to Japan before the turn of the century, and without exception stimulated interest in Sanskrit and Indian philosophy in Japan. Bunzaburō Matsumoto, Unrai Wogihara, Masaharu Anesaki, Kaigyoku Watanabe, Senshō Fujii, Hakujū Ui, Taiken Kimura—eminent Buddhologists of pre-World War II Japan—all studied in Europe under the stimulating atmosphere created by their predecessors. Shōson Miyamoto (d. 1983) and Susumu Yamaguchi (d. 1976), the respected elders

among contemporary Japanese Buddhologists, studied in England and France respectively. Yamaguchi, who studied with Etienne Lamotte, perhaps the most respected contemporary Buddhologist (d. 1983), showed unqualified respect for French scholarship.³ Yamaguchi's work on the *Viṃśatikāvṛtti*, *Mahāyān-asaṃgraha*, *Madhyāntavibhāga*, etc., established him as one of the most internationally prominent Buddhologists. Four other men perhaps need mentioning: Ekai Kawaguchi, Tōkan Tada, Bunkyō Aoki and Enga Teramoto, who entered Tibet in the early 20th century, a period when travel to that part of the world was extremely hazardous. They brought back a huge collection of Tibetan texts and provided the materials in Japan for a systematic investigation of Buddhism based on Tibetan sources. What then was the most significant contribution of European scholarship to traditional Japanese Buddhist scholarship?

Though traditional scholarship contributed much to developing "scholastic" Buddhism in China, such as Fa-hsiang, Tient'ai, Hua-yen, etc., a tradition which the Japanese followed, these schools are based on the concept of *tsung*, or sect, developed in T'ang China. This concept viewed systems of Buddhist thought from the perspective of a *p'an chiao* system which classified doctrines and evaluated them by presupposing the superiority of one's own doctrine. The *p'an chiao* system established its own patriarchal lineage and honored the sayings of those patriarchs without criticism, without investigating the primary sources from which theory and practice basic to the development of a given doctrine were derived. It was ahistorical in its approach to describing the evolution of Buddhist thought. Here we must remind ourselves that a *sūtra* (or for that matter, any Buddhist text), does not necessarily represent a distinct evolutionary stage in a linear development. The history of development of Buddhist texts is more complex than that. Each text maintains presuppositions peculiar to itself, showing that the author was aware of the doctrinal problematics which characterized his time. Texts were composed in response to issues that were considered crucial by their authors and each author addressed himself to these issues by incorporating and reformulating earlier ideas. An understanding of the history of the evolution of Buddhist thought, then, involves in part an investi-

gation of these problematics and presuppositions, not simply an understanding of a "fossilized" *p'an chiao* system, arbitrarily designed to enhance a given sectarian dogma. Modern Buddhology challenges the *p'an chiao* system and critically examines the sayings of the patriarchs. Hence, Meiji Buddhist scholarship received a stimulating breeze from students who had been exposed to modern European scholastic disciplines. In addition, European scholarship opened new fields of investigation, such as modern Pāli, Sanskrit and Tibetan studies, as well as the historical, cultural and language studies of Central Asia. And in each of these fields Japanese Buddhologists have made distinct contributions. Nevertheless, their contributions are relatively unknown—or at least not extensively utilized—in the West, with the possible exception of the works of Susumu Yamaguchi, Gadjin Nagao, Akira Hirakawa, Yūichi Kajiyama, Jikidō Takasaki, etc. Why is this so?

First, though we are able to find valuable substance in Japanese Buddhological works, they are written in paratactic paragraph-sentences, marked by frequent leaps of logic. They lack organization. Under these circumstances, Western Buddhologists who attempt to use Japanese materials for research are exasperated. For what is involved in using these materials is to break the paratactic paragraph-sentence arrangement down into normal English sentences, or alternatively completely to ignore the detail of the thought processes involved in coming to a conclusion and simply to summarize what one feels is the essence of the work. The problem is aggravated by the fact that the Japanese have not yet produced a team of well-trained translators to translate Japanese Buddhological works effectively (see, for example, the titles of articles in Japanese Buddhist journals translated into English, apparently for the convenience of the English-speaking public—most of which are quite incomprehensible). This is probably due to the fact that Japanese-English translators are not well remunerated. But regardless of the device a Western researcher utilizing Japanese materials might use—translating Japanese materials himself or using Japanese materials translated by others—it is impossible to eliminate the fundamental obscurity of thought which characterizes this type of Japanese "scholarese," even after its syntax has been fathomed.

For example, Zennosuke Tsuji's detailed work on the *History of Japanese Buddhism* (*Nihon bukk'yō-shi*), Shinshō Hanayama's painstaking research on Prince Shōtoku's *Commentaries on the Saddharmapūṇḍarīka-, Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-, and Śrīmālādevīsīmhanāda-sūtras* (*Sangyō-gisho*), Keiki Yabuki's comprehensive study on *San-shieh-chiao* (*Sangai-gyō*), etc., represent philological and historical studies of a descriptive nature—all marked by a paratactic paragraph-sentence prose style. I am not maliciously pointing out the faults of these eminent scholars. Rather, what I am trying to say is that in addition to a descriptive account—whether philological or historical—what is needed to stimulate interest among Western scholars (and also Japanese scholars, for that matter) is to provide an interpretive account of the subject under research and to organize the contents of that research in a language comprehensible to the reader.

Of course, there are exceptions. For example, Gadjin Nagao's editorial efforts in the recent publication of the *Daijō butten* (15 vols., 1973–76), demonstrate both philological and literary sensitivity, and many of the Japanese Buddhologists who have been exposed to the postwar educational system, such as Ryūshin Uryūzu, Noritoshi Aramaki, Shinjō Kawasaki, etc., write in an excellent prose style. But the fact remains that poor literary style and lack of organization are the major criticisms that can be directed to Japanese Buddhological works in general. Under these circumstances, Westerners who have had some training in Japanese are faced with two choices: to exercise infinite patience in the deciphering of paratactic paragraph-sentences, or simply to abandon the works of Japanese Buddhologists. But here, in all fairness to the Japanese, it should be added that it is not only the Japanese Buddhologists whose hermeneutics has contributed to the development of a "Buddhist hybrid Japanese." Western Buddhologists have also contributed to creating an equally "barbaric" language, a matter which Paul Griffiths has eloquently described in his essay, "Buddhist Hybrid English: Some Notes on Philology and Hermeneutics for Buddhologists."¹ I shall not recapitulate what he has already said. Here I wish to zero in on criticisms directed specifically to Japanese Buddhism.

Second, by necessity, Japanese Buddhologists whose primary research languages are Sanskrit, Pāli or Tibetan (e.g.,

Susumu Yamaguchi, Gadjin Nagao, Yūichi Kajiyama, Jikidō Takasaki, Egaku Maeda, etc.) have established some degree of communication with their Western counterparts, primarily because modern Buddhist studies based on these languages are products of Western scholarship. In contrast, in spite of the fact that East Asian Buddhism is a field practically dominated by the Japanese, Japanese works in this field are not extensively employed by Western Buddhologists (with the exception of Leon Hurvitz, Stanley Weinstein, Minoru Kiyota, etc.), simply because there are very few Western specialists in East Asian Buddhism who can effectively employ Japanese sources. Here, one might argue that inasmuch as modern Buddhist studies based on Sanskrit, Pāli and Tibetan are Western products, those interested in these products need to master a Western language—as many Japanese Buddhologists working in these fields have done; likewise, inasmuch as modern Buddhist studies based on Japanese are the products of Japanese scholarship, Western scholars interested in these products need to master Japanese.

Of course, this is a reasonable argument, but at this particular period of history—a period when Japanese has not yet developed into an international language to the extent that English and French have, and when Japanese Buddhologists write in paratactic paragraph-sentences—Western Buddhologists who are interested in East Asian Buddhism cannot help but express exasperation in employing Japanese sources. Though it is true that we have managed to produce promising young American specialists in East Asian Buddhism in the past ten years (for example, Diana Paul, Paul Groner, Aaron Koski, William Grosnick, John Keenan, Sallie King, etc.), the development of Western specialists in East Asian Buddhism depends to a large degree upon the efforts of Japanese specialists to stimulate interest in that field. This can only be done by developing a more effective means of communication, literally and verbally.

Third, Japanese Buddhological works generally consist of a dialogue between the author and the text or texts he is investigating (we might call it a “monologue” instead), not a dialogue between author and reader. Japanese Buddhological works in general tend to become “monologic” because Japanese Bud-

dhology today is highly specialized, placing greater emphasis on intense textual studies. Though there are great merits in such a type of scholarship, such scholarship is not interpretive, in the sense that it does not place the thought representative of the text or texts being examined within the historical evolution of Buddhist thought, describe that thought as a response to the historical need of a particular period of time, or indicate the relevance of that thought to the problems faced by the modern man. This is not to say that the works of Japanese Buddhologists are worthless. On the contrary, the depth of their research commands respect and Western scholars have much to learn from them. But Japanese Buddhologists will have to develop a keener awareness of their audience, and clearly identify the theme of their work, clarify the method employed to describe that theme, and organize the theme in a structured manner if they entertain a desire to have the products of their research recognized internationally.

In sum, the criticisms I have made above are not designed to undermine Japanese Buddhist scholarship, for I fully recognize that the Japanese have skillfully incorporated modern European scholarship and have successfully developed a sophisticated form of comparative textual studies (incorporating Sanskrit, Pāli, Tibetan and Chinese materials), which in turn has enhanced serious historical studies. For example, Yamaguchi, in his *Daijō to shite no Jōdo*, 1963, examines Sino-Japanese Pure Land thought from the perspective of the history of development of Mahāyāna thought, particularly Mādhyamika and Yogācāra; Seizan Yanagida's *Zen shisō-shi no seiritsu* (in Bukkyō no shisō Series, Vol. 7), 1969, describes the development of Zen thought historically, beginning from the *Suttanipāṭta*, not withstanding the fact that sectarian Zen undermines historical studies;⁵ and Noriaki Hakamaya's "Bukkyō-shi no naka no Genjō" (in *Genjō*), 1981, contextualizes Hsüan-tsang's work within the historical development of Buddhist thought *per se*. These men—all first rate philologists—do not fragment Buddhist thought geographically or by sects, but interpret thought and personalities (who contributed to the development of Buddhist thought) within a larger framework of the historical evolution of Buddhist thought. In this connection, it should be noted that in Mahāyāna studies, we are no longer interested in

whether there was a basic historical personality in the founding of Buddhism and a core text or texts representative of the thought of that personality or not. Rather, we are concerned with the evolution of thought. For Buddhism is basically interested in the notion of wisdom and the manner in which that notion was accepted, transmitted and domesticated, and thereby enriched the cultural contents of the countries into which it was introduced. That is, Buddhism survived in many countries in Asia primarily because it made no attempts at Indianization: it enriched the cultural contents of the country into which it was introduced by being absorbed into the indigenous culture—to the extent that the Central Asians and Chinese managed to develop what the Japanese refer to as *gikyō*,⁶ Buddhist apocryphal texts, which in my opinion contain thoughts representative of those domesticated. The dynamics involved in the historical development of Buddhism must be given serious consideration in order to understand the status of Buddhism in Asia today, and an examination of the historical development of Buddhism requires philological and philosophical approaches of the kind Yamaguchi, Yanagida, Hakamaya, etc., have observed.

Moreover, Japanese Buddhologists have established excellent team work in producing Buddhist dictionaries, encyclopedias, catalogues, indices and other basic reference materials by utilizing the materials and knowledge they have accumulated during their 1,500 years of unbroken Buddhist scholastic tradition. For example, the *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten*, an encyclopedic work on Buddhist texts in thirteen volumes—the first volume published in 1933 and the last in 1978—is a work that was made possible by teams of Japanese Buddhologists working over several decades; while the *Index to the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* in three volumes—the first (Sanskrit-Tibetan-Chinese) published in 1973, the second (Chinese-Tibetan) published in 1977, and the third (Tibetan-Sanskrit) published in 1978—is a work that was accomplished under the supervision of Akira Hirakawa, aided by a team of Hirakawa's dedicated students (Shun'ei Hirai, Giei Yoshizu, Noriaki Hakamaya and Sō Takahashi), consuming over ten years. And finally, it must be added that the Japanese Buddhologists actually lead the world in terms of Buddhist publications.⁷

Hence, notwithstanding the criticisms I have made, I strongly believe that it was a serious error on the part of Edward Conze to have said, "This limitation of not knowing Chinese and Japanese is not as serious as it sounds. . . ."8 The error, in fact, is particularly apparent with regard to the Japanese language. My criticisms of Japanese Buddhology are made with the hope that Japanese Buddhology will develop better means of communication—literally and verbally—so that its products can be employed by Western Buddhologists more effectively and extensively. Since I have made reference to Conze's all-too-well-known caustic remark, I might as well refer to another. It is interesting to note that Conze, in his recent *Memoirs*, says,

. . . the basic trouble over the last 400 years had been the imbalance created by the white races outstripping all the others. They had taken the lead even in such unlikely fields as Buddhology which one would have regarded as the preserve of Orientals; in fact, even scholars from the East counted only if they had studied with the White man.⁹

Ironically, notwithstanding the apparent bigotry pregnant in such a statement, the statement does in fact reflect an element of truth. In the case of the Japanese, Kajiyama, Aramaki, Akira Yuyama, just to mention a few contemporary Japanese Buddhologists of reputable status—not reiterating those who had studied in Europe prior to World War II—have all studied in Europe. But what Conze neglected to notice is that eminent Japanese scholars, such as Nagao, Hirakawa, Hajime Nakamura, Kōsai Yasui, Ōchō Enichi, Hajime Sakurabe, and the younger generation of Buddhologists, such as Shun'ei Hirai, Shigeo Kamata, etc. have not studied in the West, and that many American students are now flocking to Japan to study under their instructions. Buddhology today is no longer a monopoly of any one ethnic or national group. Rather, it is a form of scholarship whose development is contingent on sharing and stimulating ideas on an international scale, just like any other form of scholarship. The fact that late 19th-century Europe has contributed much to the advancement of Buddhology was due to historical circumstances, that is, the impact of the 18th-century period of Enlightenment in Europe and the fact that European colonialism, particularly that of England and France,

stimulated interest in South and East Asian studies. The Tibetans had enhanced Buddhist scholarship in medieval Tibet, the Chinese during the T'ang period, the Japanese during the Heian and Kamakura periods. Today, we cannot engage in any serious research in the field of Buddhist studies by relying solely on the products of Western scholarship at the exclusion of the products of Japanese scholarship.

Problems and Prospects

In spite of the contributions made by modern Buddhologists in recent years, thanks in large part to 19th century European scholarship, many problems are inherent in modern Buddhology. Here, we are no longer talking about Western Buddhology or Japanese Buddhology. We are talking about modern Buddhology *per se*.

First, the translation of Buddhist texts is still in its preliminary stages. Thus Conze has said:

... perhaps 5 percent of the Mahāyāna sūtras have so far been reliably edited, and perhaps 2 percent intelligibly translated. It is clear that inferences drawn from the scanty materials at our disposal must remain rather dubious.¹⁰

Since Conze read neither Chinese nor Japanese, the percentage number given above would be considerably smaller if we were to take into account sūtras, Vinaya texts and śāstras not extant in Pāli or Sanskrit, but extant in the Chinese translation, as well as classical commentaries and studies on these texts in Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan. But modern Buddhology requires not only the editing and translating of sūtras, but also the critical examination of texts, particularly through comparative textual studies employing Sanskrit (whenever possible), Chinese and Tibetan to understand the evolution of Buddhist thought, such as the kind of works done by Yamaguchi, Yanagida, Hakamaya, etc., as previously cited. Products of the Buddhology of recent years, such as Lamotte's *L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti* (1962), David Seyfort Ruegg's *La Théorie du Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra* (1969), Jikidō Takasaki's *Nyoraijō shisō no keisei* (1974), Shunei Hirai's *Chūgoku hannya shisō-shi kenkyū* (1976), *Mahāyāna*

Buddhist Meditation: Theory and Practice (ed., Minoru Kiyota, 1978), just to mention a few, are all philologically oriented, emphasizing an objective assessment of the doctrinal contents of their respective subjects. But, as Conze has rightly pointed out, "inferences drawn from the scanty materials at our disposal must remain rather dubious," for we have over 4,000 Buddhist texts in the Tibetan Tripiṭaka and about the same number in the Chinese Tripiṭaka.

Second, modern Buddhology also emphasizes the importance of historical knowledge, including the socio-cultural basis that led to the origin and subsequent development of Buddhism. Thus, for example, the *Sacred Books of the East* is not only a collection of Buddhist texts, but also includes non-Buddhist texts, such as the *Laws of Manu* and the works of Jainism; and Rhys Davids' *Buddhist India* (1903) not only depicts the life and teachings of the Buddha, but also portrays the cultural, social and political institutions of the time. And, it should be noted that Oldenberg's *Buddha: sein leben, seine lehre, seine Gemeinde* is the first comprehensive work in the Buddhist studies tradition to depict the Buddha as a historical personality based on Pāli sources. Such an historical approach stimulated interest in examining Chinese historical materials dealing with South Asia, such as Fa-hsien's *Record of the Buddhaland* (which describes India of the period from late fourth to early fifth centuries), Hsüan-tsang's *Record of the Western Regions* (which describes India of the period from early to mid-seventh century), and I-ching's *Record of the South Seas* (which describes India and Southeast Asia of the late seventh century). This kind of historical approach to Buddhism no longer allows the mythologization of the historical Buddha and of Buddhist India, and the concomitant dogmatization of Buddhist thought.

Actually, modern Buddhology—whether Western, Indian or Japanese—has not completely severed itself from sectarian dogma. For example, some Theravāda scholars still presuppose that the Pāli canon represents the oldest recording of Buddhism, a notion which philologists have now completely repudiated.¹¹ It is for this reason that Nagao, reiterating the views of Friedrich Weller and John Brough, says, "studies with the Pāli canon alone are fruitless and purposeless."¹² On the other hand, Mahāyāna scholars generally presuppose Mahāyāna su-

periority over Hīnāyana, or, more specifically, Mahāyāna superiority over the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha vehicles, despite the fact that historically these vehicles represent entities of the Buddhist tradition, and are not simply inferior vehicles, but vehicles provided for a given audience at a given time. Doctrinal bias of these types compels Buddhologists squarely to face a fundamental issue: do the sūtras (of Hīnāyāna and Mahāyāna vintages) represent the actual sayings of the Buddha? Obviously not, as philological and historical investigations have now conclusively proven (see n. 11 above). The composition of a variety of sūtras (including those not extant in Pāli and Sanskrit), as well as śāstric commentaries, the codification of orthodox Vinaya and the subsequent development of Mahāyāna bodhisattva *śīla*—all these represent the evolution of Buddhist thought, practice and institutions. Ideally, the purpose of modern Buddhology is to avoid the pitfalls of traditional sectarian dogmas. Nagao therefore continues,

We now have important publications such as the *Sanskrit-texts aus den Turfanfunden*, in addition to the Chinese and Tibetan translations at our disposal. The philological comparison between the corresponding texts of different traditions as well as within a respective tradition will undoubtedly unravel the formation process of pre-sectarian Buddhist doctrines. . .¹³

Indeed, an investigation of pre-sectarian Buddhist doctrines—odd as it may seem—is a subject that has not been thoroughly investigated, a work through which ideas germane to many systems of thought later developed might be found. This type of investigation must be observed by making reference to canonical sources preserved in many languages. Akira Hirakawa's *Ritsuzō no kenkyū* (1960), *Genshi bukkyō no kenkyū* (1964), and *Shoki daijō bukkyō no kenkyū* (1968), making reference to Pāli, Śanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese sources, are works of the kind Nagao is suggesting. But very few works of this kind are available in a Western language.

Third, and perhaps the most serious of all, is that modern Buddhology is not invulnerable to criticism from those in other disciplines. For Buddhologists whose basic orientation is philological, philosophical and historical—notwithstanding the va-

lidity of these disciplinary approaches—ironically cannot respond effectively to a crucial question: how can one totally committed to a purely objective investigation of Buddhism manage to develop originality of thought and stimulate the thought of those in other disciplines? For sheer objectivity makes Buddhology the province of the academically qualified few, who might not have any concern whatever for the historical destiny of man. The problem is not whether a Buddhologist is a Buddhist or not, for that is simply a matter of personal choice. The issue goes deeper than that. The pitfall of modern Buddhology—with its emphasis on sheer objectivity—lies in ignoring the hopes and aspirations which the Buddhists throughout their history have derived from the Buddha-Dharma, as they themselves have conceived it. For it is these intangible elements which have influenced the actual cultural contents of Buddhist Asia. In other words, the pitfall of modern Buddhology lies in separating the masses, whatever their interpretation of the Buddha-Dharma might be, from the actual current of history. For example, a purely philosophical analysis of Buddhist theory does not take into account that the masses constitute a significant entity in the dynamics of historical development. The pitfall lies in ignoring the real intent with which the Buddhists of the past have expounded the Dharma, that is, to articulate the historical significance of Buddhist thought. For the intent of the historical Buddha was not by any means to ignore the historicity of mankind, but to provide the wisdom to cope with the everlasting crisis to which man is subject, and to contribute creatively to world civilization. It is within this context that we see the possibility of cooperation between Buddhologists of good conscience and those of equally good conscience involved in other academic disciplines.

To identify Buddhism only within the limits of a rational philosophy of the type which characterized late 19th-century Europe, then, is inadequate. Rudolf Otto wrote of *das Heilige* in 1917, and it is within this religious context that Buddhist cult practice and devotionism bear significance for human existence—and for Buddhist studies. Thus, Stanislaw Schayer, a Polish Buddhologist, challenged Oldenberg's reduction of the Buddha to a mere historical personality, emphasizing the fact that if the Buddha were conceived only within the limits of

history and social ethics, then he would not have inspired men and women, and Buddhism would not have provided the basis for the religious aspirations of the population of Asia for more than 2,500 years. This is a point which Yamaguchi consistently stressed, and which Arthur L. Basham, an eminent British Indologist, and Erick Zürcher, an eminent Dutch Sinologist, for example, are articulating.

Thus, E.J. Thomas (*The Life of the Buddha as Legend and History*, 1927), Alfred Foucher (*La Vie du Bouddha d'après les textes et les monuments de l'Inde*, 1949), and Shōkō Watanabe (*Shin shakuson-den*, 1966), all wisely took into account the element of *das Heilige* in portraying the life of the Buddha, for it is historically inaccurate to discuss the contents of early Buddhism solely on the basis of a sectarian tradition and within the limits of the "rational," as Mrs. Rhys Davids (*Gotama the Man*, 1928), for one, has done. An attempt to interpret the Buddha in this manner represents only one of the many dimensions of the Buddha's character, for in emphasizing the "rational" element of the Buddha, she has completely ignored the basis for the development of Buddhist cult practice and devotionism among the masses in India and in other Asian countries in subsequent periods. We must be mindful that Buddhism, like any other world religion, contains its own mythology, cult practice and soteriology, and, in the case of Mahāyāna, identifies a transcendental Buddha (*dharmakāya*).

The term "Buddhology" now needs redefinition. It is a field in the humanities which is involved in the study of the Buddhist classics and in interpreting the bearing their contents have had in the past—and continue to have—upon world civilization. The study of the Buddhist classics does not imply parroting their contents, but interpreting what they are trying to say in a manner that is comprehensible to others. This redefinition does not by any means undermine the validity of modern Buddhological disciplines as they were developed in 19th-century Europe. For, regardless of new theories and methodologies developed in modern social studies, the fact remains that only a small segment of Buddhist literature has been translated, and such translation can only be accomplished by those equipped with the historical and philological tools emphasized by 19th-century European Buddhology. And only when the

literature has been made accessible by Buddhologists can it be employed by those in other disciplines (such as the history of religions) to enhance their own scholarship. Unfortunately, very few American foundations (possibly with the exception of the NEH) take kindly to serious annotated translation projects of the kind undertaken in fifth century to eighth century China, medieval Tibet and Japan, and the types of modern Buddhist scholarship represented by the French and Japanese. The seeming interest in Buddhism in the United States notwithstanding, the development of Buddhology here is contingent on promoting interest in philological, philosophical and historical disciplines, not in advancing speculative theories, and certainly not in promoting sectarian dogma. But it is equally important to develop an awareness that Buddhist studies constitute an integral part of the humanities, and that the Buddhist masses constitute an integral part of the tradition. Buddhology includes the study of Buddhist thought, the Buddhists, and their social institutions and practices. It is in this context that we are able to see the need for an intense dialogue between Western and Japanese Buddhologists.

NOTES

1. The tradition of Sanskrit studies had been consistently maintained by Shingon monks since the Kamakura period, but it was in the Tokugawa period that it reached the peak of development. The pioneer was Jōgon (1640–1702) of Reiun-ji of Yushima in Edo. He is the author of *Shittan sanmitsu shō* (8 *chūan*), a text which discusses linguistic details of Sanskrit. His work stimulated the development of classical Japanese philology. Donjaku (1673–1742), Jakugon (1701–1771) and Onkō (1717–1804) appeared successively after Jōgon. Onkō, popularly known as Jiun Sonja, studied Buddhist texts such as the *Bhadracaripranidana*, *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*, *Sukhavatīvyūha*, etc., in Sanskrit. He established a system of Sanskrit syntax by systematizing noun-, adjective-, and verb-endings, and even attempted to reconstruct the Sanskrit from a Chinese *prajñā* text. His work, the *Bongaku Shinryō*, in 1,000 *chūan*, completed in 1776, contains materials for the systematic study of Sanskrit at that time. Indeed, Onkō's work was the forerunner of modern Sanskrit studies, preceding the European linguists by a few decades. Unfortunately, Onkō's high standard of scholarship was not maintained by his students, and modern Sanskrit studies in contemporary Japan are the product of European scholarship.

2. The Meiji government established Shinto as the state religion and rallied around it to inculcate nationalism, which the Buddhists—notably the Shin Sangha, represented by Nishi Hongan-ji, Higashi Hongan-ji and the Takada branch—resisted. But, in due time, because of Higashi Hongan-ji's close association with the Tokugawas in the past, Nishi Hongan-ji was favored by the Meiji leaders. No more can be said about this fascinating subject in the course of this paper.

3. See Susumu Yamaguchi, *Furansu bukkyō-gaku no gōjūnen*. (Kyoto: Heiraku-ji shoten, 1953).

4. Paul J. Griffiths, "Buddhist Hybrid English: Some Notes on Philology and Hermeneutics for Buddhologists," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin), Vol. 4, No. 2, 1981, pp. 17–32. See in particular a passage he quotes from one of Conze's works, p. 29.

5. I have previously written a short article criticizing traditional Zen scholarship. See my "Comments on Zen," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin), Vol. 1, No. 2, 1979, pp. 57–62.

6. For information on the "gikyō," see the following works:

Tairyō Makita. "Chūgoku bukkyō ni okeru gikyō kenkyū josetsu," *Tōhō gakuho*, No. 35, Kyoto, March, 1964, pp. 337–95.

—————. *Gikyō kenkyū*. (Kyoto: Kyoto daigaku jimbun kagaku kenkyū-shō), 1976.

Kazuo Okabe. Review: "Tairyō Makita's *Gikyō, kenkyū*." *Komazawa daigaku bukkyōgaku-bu ronshū* (Tokyo: Komazawa University), No. 8, 1977, pp. 247–54.

7. A. Bharati says: ". . . I believe that about as much is being published annually in Japanese on Buddhism, Tantrism, Indian and Tibetan religious studies as in all occidental languages put together." (*The Tantric Tradition*, Doubleday, 1970, p. 316). I do not know how Bharati arrived at his figure, but if we were to limit ourselves only to the number of articles which appeared in Japanese scholastic journals, there were over 14,000 items published from the late 19th century to 1935, some 27,000 between 1931 and 1955, and over 9,000 between 1956 and 1971, according to the *Kaitei zōhō: bukkyō ronbun sō-mokuroku* (1935), *Bukkyōgaku kankei zasshi ronbun mokuroku* (1961), and *Bukkyōgaku kankei zasshi ronbun bunrui mokuroku* (1972), the catalogues of essays on Buddhist studies compiled periodically by Ryūkoku University. Naturally there is no direct correlation between the amount of publication and its quality, but the numbers cited above do reflect the sustained interest in Buddhist studies in contemporary Japan. The Japanese have also published catalogues of Buddhist books authored by Buddhologists. For the Western audience, the most convenient are those published by the Tōyō Bunko, Tokyo, in recent years, summarizing selected works of Japanese specialists in Indian, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese Buddhism in English.

- Shinjō Kawasaki. *Indian Buddhism* (Oriental Studies in Japan: Retrospect and Prospect, 1963–72), (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies), 1977.
- Tokuo Kimata. *Chinese Philosophy and Religion* (Oriental Studies in Japan: Retrospect and Prospect, 1963–72), (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies), 1974.
- Hōrō Tamura. *Japanese Buddhism* (Oriental Studies in Japan: Retrospect and Prospect, 1963–72), (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies), 1980.
- Zuihō Yamaguchi. *Tibetan Studies* (Oriental Studies in Japan: Retrospect and Prospect, 1963–72), (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies), 1975.

In addition, the *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* (Supplementary Issue), Tokyo: The Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies, August 9, 1958 (revised edition), pp. 3–66, provides an abstract of Japanese Buddhological works (including dissertations) made between 1946–58. Also see, A. Hirakawa and E.B. Ceadel, "Japanese Research on Buddhism since the Meiji Period," *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. XI, No. 4 (Tokyo: Sophia University), 1956, pp. 69–96. And perhaps one of the best in recent years which surveys Japanese works on Indian Buddhism is Hajime Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes*. Osaka: KUFUS Publications, 1982.

8. Edward Conze. *Buddhist Thought in India*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962, first printing), p. 7 footnote.

9. Edward Conze. *The Memoirs of A Modern Gnostic (Part I)*. Sherbourne, England: The Samizdat Publishing Co., 1979, pp. 58–59.

10. Edward Conze. *Buddhist Thought in India*, p. 200.

11. See, for example, the following works:

Akira Hirakawa. *Ritsuzō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sankibo, 1960)

———. *Genshi bukkyō nō kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1964)

E. Lamotte. *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*. (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1958)

Egaku Maeda. *Genshi bukkyō-kyōten no seiritsu-shi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sankibo, 1964)

L. Renou & J. Filliozat. *L'Inde Classique*, t. 2, (Paris-Hanoi, 1953)

Hakuju Ui. *Bukkyō kyōten-shi* (Tokyo: Tōjō shuppan, 1957)

M. Winternitz. *Geschichte der Indischen Literatur*. 3 Bde. (Leipzig: C.F. Amelangs, 1907–22)

Both European and Japanese Buddhologists have done sufficient work to discredit the idea that sūtras represent the literal sayings of the Buddha.

12. Gadjin Nagao, "Presidential Address," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin) Vol. 1, No. 2, 1979, p. 83.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 83.