

CHAPTER 12

BUDDHISM IN THE KAMAKURA PERIOD

INTRODUCTION

Buddhism has had a long and illustrious history in Japan, but it was in the Kamakura period that Buddhism in Japan came into full flower. The forms of Buddhism that emerged at that time – Pure Land, Zen, and Nichiren – were largely responsible for the dissemination of Buddhist beliefs and practices throughout Japanese society. The success of this movement lay in tailoring the ideas and goals of Buddhism to the concerns of the populace at large. Hence, Kamakura Buddhism, as the entire religious movement is called, has left an indelible mark on Japanese history and has made Buddhism a lasting and pervasive component of Japanese culture.

Buddhism originated in India and spread to China about four centuries after the time of the historical Buddha Sākyamuni (ca. fifth to fourth century, B.C.). It was transmitted to Japan from China via the Korean peninsula around the middle of the sixth century.¹ The cultural gulf that existed at that time between Japan on the one hand and China and Korea on the other was considerable. Japan's ruling class accepted Buddhism as the embodiment of an advanced and superior civilization, and in order to gain control over the concepts and technology that Buddhism brought to Japan, the elite provided a succession of large temples where Buddhism could put down roots. A community of priests supported by the state and the aristocracy belonged to each of these temples. The priests pursued activities in a variety of fields: They learned how to read the Chinese version of the Buddhist scriptures that had been translated from Sanskrit; they became experts in engineering, architecture, and medicine – fields of knowledge that were concentrated in the temples – and they performed the various ceremonies and prayers requested by the imperial court and the aristocracy for

¹ *Nihon shoki*, in *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, vol. 68 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1957–67), p. 100. Hereafter *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* is cited as *NKBT*.

their spiritual and material well-being. As temples became better organized and acquired control over vast estates (*shōen*), their operation became more complex and internal power struggles more prevalent.

Japan absorbed Buddhism as a comprehensive and advanced cultural medium from the outside but did not, at first, give substantial weight to its religious concerns per se. Three centuries after Buddhism's arrival, however, around the middle of the Nara period, there was an awakening to Buddhism's actual teachings. Priests became more and more involved in specifically religious activities. Some withdrew from the temples and secluded themselves in mountainous regions, proselytizing among the common people.²

At the popular level, various types of beliefs and practices with indigenous Japanese roots circulated among the people, and among them, the priests who left the temples gradually found a receptive audience for their teachings. The Buddhism that they introduced into these circles contained more sophisticated doctrines and more refined rituals than the native traditions did. Buddhism was thus used to give greater form and expression to Japan's simpler folk beliefs and practices. The *kami*, or indigenous deities, were explained using Buddhist doctrines, and the native practices were further ritualized through contact with Buddhism.

From late in the tenth century, aristocratic society in Japan started to become stagnant and closed. Important government positions were monopolized by a few families, and many aristocrats and members of the literati could not find positions appropriate to their skills, even when they possessed superior ability and extensive knowledge. Individuals frustrated by this situation began to show greater interest in Buddhism. They were attracted to its teaching of the relative and conditional nature of this world and to its goal of transcending it. They studied Buddhism's complex doctrines, which up to that time had been the exclusive pursuit of scholar-priests. Aristocrats and the literati sought out priests to lecture on the scriptures, particularly priests active outside the temples. These events paved the way for Kamakura's new movements to appear in Buddhist history.

During this period a number of large temples had close ties with aristocratic society through the religious ceremonies they performed on its behalf. Among them were the Enryakuji on Mount Hiei and the Tōdaiji and the Kōfukuji of Nara, all major centers of Buddhist learn-

² One example of these priests is Gyōki, described in the *Shoku Nihongi*, in *Kokushi taiki*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Yoshikuwa kōbunkan, 1929–64), pp. 68–69. Hereafter *Kokushi taiki* is cited as *KT*. Other examples can be found in the *Nihon ryōiki*, *NKBT*, vol. 70.

ing. The temples of Nara preserved the orthodox teachings of the Kegon and the Hossō schools, whereas Mount Hiei preserved the teachings of the Tendai school. Mount Hiei also became a center for the formulation of the new doctrines that popularized Buddhism throughout Japan. The priests who established ties with the aristocracy and literati in Kyoto were also those living at Mount Hiei or in its vicinity. Among them, there arose a tendency to interpret Buddhism not in a scholarly vein but, rather, in subjective religious terms. As beliefs and practices spread among the aristocrats, the stage was set for the emergence of Kamakura's revolutionary Buddhist movements.

From the end of the twelfth century through the middle of the thirteenth – that is, in the first half of the Kamakura period – some of Japan's foremost religious figures appeared, in quick succession. The schools of Buddhism that today claim them as their founders have long had considerable influence in Japan. From their inception in the Kamakura period, these schools stood as a separate religious movement from the eight schools that existed before them. These new schools came to be known collectively as Kamakura Buddhism. The establishment of Kamakura Buddhism was a pivotal event in Japanese history, because through it Buddhism was adapted to Japanese ways and thus made accessible to the common people.

THE ORIGINATORS OF KAMAKURA BUDDHISM

Hōnen and Shinran

Kamakura Buddhism criticized the formalism of the Buddhist establishment of its day and instead emphasized belief and practice.³ The person at the forefront of this new movement was Hōnen (1133–1212).⁴ He was born in the province of Mimasaka (present-day Okayama Prefecture), and while still a child, he lost his father in a local political dispute. As a result of that experience, Hōnen was moved to enter the Buddhist clergy as a novice. Some years later he went to Mount Hiei to receive intensive religious training. During Hōnen's lifetime, one of the few ways for people from the provinces to penetrate Japan's elite intellectual circles was to become a priest. This

³ Scholars since the Meiji period have frequently compared the new Buddhism of Kamakura Japan to the Christian Reformation of Europe. See, for examples, Hara Katsurō, "Tōzai no shūkyō kaikaku," in *Nihon chūseishi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Dōbunkan, 1929), pp. 304–21; and Matsumoto Hikojiro, *Nihon bunka shiron* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō, 1942).

⁴ Concerning Hōnen's life, see Tamura Enchō, *Hōnen* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1959); and Bukkyō daigaku, ed., *Hōnen Shōnin kenkyū* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1961).

is precisely the route that Hōnen took. He went to Mount Hiei and received training first in Tendai doctrine. Later he took as his teacher a priest named Eikū (d. 1179), who had distanced himself from the mainstream of Mount Hiei's religious organization. Hōnen followed Eikū's example of withdrawing from Mount Hiei's political entanglements and secluding himself on a remote part of the mountain for study and religious training. Under Eikū, Hōnen studied the Buddhist scriptures and doctrinal treatises. For a time he concentrated on the Vinaya, containing the rules of conduct for Buddhist clergy, and he began to reflect on what it meant to be a priest. He also read the *Ōjōyōshū* by Genshin (942–1017), which exposed him to the Pure Land teachings that the Tendai school had integrated into its religious system.⁵ In addition, Hōnen traveled to Nara and received instruction in the doctrines of Hossō and the other philosophies of Nara Buddhism. In short, Hōnen received a classical education in the teachings of the established Buddhist schools.

In 1175, after thirty years on Mount Hiei, Hōnen happened to read the *Kuan ching shu*, a commentary by the Chinese master Shan-tao (613–81) on the Pure Land Meditation Sutra (Kanmuryōjukyō).⁶ Hōnen also had a revelatory vision of Shan-tao, and as a result of this experience, he began to expound the doctrine of the “exclusive *nembutsu*” (*senju nembutsu*). Shan-tao, who formulated his teachings in seventh-century China, advocated the practice of intoning Amida Buddha's name in the form “I take refuge in the Buddha Amida.” This practice, known in Japan as the *nembutsu*, was emphasized even more by Hōnen as the single and exclusive act leading to enlightenment in Amida's resplendent and transcendent realm called the Pure Land.

The basic scripture describing Amida and his Pure Land paradise is the Larger Pure Land Sutra (Muryōjukyō). According to this scripture, Amida framed forty-eight vows in a previous lifetime when he was living as the ascetic monk Hōzō, before becoming a Buddha. He phrased the vows in such a way as to make their fulfillment a condition for his own enlightenment and Buddhahood.⁷ In the eighteenth

5 *Ōjōyōshū*, in *Genshin, Nihon shisō taikēi*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1970–82), pp. 9–322, is the most representative work of Pure Land beliefs and practices in the Heian period. It was written in 985 by the Tendai priest Genshin, on Mount Hiei. Hereafter, *Nihon shisō taikēi* is cited as *NST*.

6 *Kuan ching shu*, in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, vol. 37 (Tokyo: Taishō shinshū daizōkyō kankōkai, 1924–32), pp. 245–78. Hereafter *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* is cited as *TD*. For the Pure Land Meditation Sutra itself, see *Kanmuryōjukyō*, *TD*, vol. 12, pp. 340–6. Shan-tao was the foremost Pure Land thinker in China during the Tang period and was very active in Pure Land proselytization. 7 *Muryōjukyō*, *TD*, vol. 12, pp. 267–9.

vow, known as the principal vow (*hongan*), he stated that everyone who invokes his name will be born in their next lifetime in the Pure Land.⁸ The scripture stated that in fact the monk Hōzō had achieved Buddhahood as Amida and that the Pure Land he created now exists. Consequently, Hōnen believed that anyone intoning Amida's name is assured of birth in that paradise after death in this world.⁹ Amida Buddha shows no partiality in welcoming human beings into his Pure Land. Thus, what binds them to Amida must be an act that can be performed by any person. Hōnen considered the spoken *nembutsu* – that is, uttering the name of Amida Buddha – to be that very act.¹⁰

Hōnen believed that among Buddhism's innumerable religious practices, *nembutsu* could be singled out as the simplest and most efficacious one.¹¹ Therefore, it is the most fundamental Buddhist practice of the present age, and it stands in perfect accord with the essence of Buddhism. This was an epoch-making teaching in Japan, because for the first time Buddhism's path of salvation was opened to people without specialized religious training or discipline. When Hōnen left Mount Hiei and began to expound this new teaching in Kyoto, he attracted the interest of many people, but he also elicited doctrinal criticism from Buddhist authorities. In an attempt to defend himself, Hōnen presented a doctrinal systematization of his own, in his magnum opus, the *Senjakushū*.¹² In this work, written for the benefit of those aristocrats who had accepted his ideas, Hōnen indicated why it was essential to adopt the Pure Land teachings: Through them one is drawn in faith to Amida Buddha's principal vow, which will deliver all people into the Pure Land. One is inspired to intone Amida's name because one is the beneficiary of his compassion. Hōnen maintained that if these points are understood, then none of Buddhism's other doctrines will be necessary.¹³

Hōnen's assertions were based on the pessimistic assumption that the human beings in his time were mired in foolishness and wrongdoings. A time long ago, he believed, humans were capable of attaining Buddhahood through their own efforts, but in the present age that is

8 Ibid., p. 268.

9 *Muryōjūkyōshaku*, in *Hōnen Ippen*, *NST*, vol. 10, p. 50.

10 *Senjaku hongan nembutsushū*, in *Hōnen Ippen*, *NST*, vol. 10, pp. 94–100.

11 Ibid., pp. 101–9; and *Ichimai kishōmon*, in *Kana hōgoshū*, *NKBT*, vol. 83, p. 53.

12 The full title of this work is *Senjaku hongan nembutsushū*. For standard editions of the text, see *Hōnen Ippen*, *NST*, vol. 10, pp. 87–162; and *TD*, vol. 83, pp. 1–20. Hōnen composed the work in 1199.

13 *Senjaku hongan nembutsushū*, in *Hōnen Ippen*, *NST*, vol. 10, pp. 103–5.

no longer possible, as Śākyamuni Buddha's time has long passed.¹⁴ This kind of pessimism emerged in Japan around the mid-Heian period, based on a sober introspective view of the human condition. Aristocrats and the literati tended more and more to perceive human existence in its actual state rather than in the idealized form for which humans were supposed to strive. Various literary works produced in the Heian period echo these sentiments, including Japanese poetry (*waka*), diaries (*nikki*), and narratives (*monogatari*).¹⁵ Hōnen carried this introspective view of the human condition one step further. He moved from human foolishness and wrongdoing to Amida Buddha's perfection and all-pervading compassion. In perceiving the dramatic gulf between the two, Hōnen concluded that total reliance on Amida was the only hope for humans in the present age.

Shinran (1173–1262) inherited Hōnen's teachings and developed them even further.¹⁶ A member of the lower aristocracy, Shinran was probably born in Kyoto. Like Hōnen, he became a monk at a young age. He spent some twenty years of his life on Mount Hiei but found unsatisfying the Buddhism espoused there. In 1201, Shinran secluded himself for religious practices in a temple in Kyoto known as the Rokkakudō. During this seclusion he received a nocturnal revelation that created for him a new religious outlook. This event marked the turning point in Shinran's life, at which time he devoted himself single-mindedly to Hōnen's teachings. The master–disciple association between them, nonetheless, was short-lived. Shinran was separated from Hōnen during a suppression of the new Pure Land movement in 1207, which was sanctioned by the imperial court. Shinran was banished to Echigo Province (present-day Niigata Prefecture).¹⁷ Several years later, when he was pardoned, Shinran moved to Hitachi Province (present-day Ibaragi Prefecture) instead of returning to Kyoto. There he became an active proselytizer of the Pure Land teachings. From the time of his banishment, Shinran described himself as neither priest nor layman.¹⁸

14 This eschatological way of thinking is usually referred to as *mappō shisō*, “decline of the Dharma” thought. One Heian-period work that is representative of this way of thinking is the *Mappō iōmyōki*, in *Shinshū zenshū*, vol. 58 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1915 and 1975), pp. 495–502.

15 Examples are *Kagerō nikki*, *Murasaki Shikibu nikki*, and *Sarashina nikki*. *Genji monogatari* is an exception to this pattern.

16 Concerning Shinran's life, see Akamatsu Toshihide, *Shinran* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1961); and Matsuno Junkō, *Shinran: sono shōgai to shisō no tenkai katei* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1959).

17 Concerning the suppression, see the appendix of the *Tannishō*, in *Shinran-shū Nichiren-shū*, *NKBT*, vol. 82 p. 265, n. 175.

18 *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *Shinran, NST*, vol. 11, p. 258.

He openly took a wife, in clear violation of the vow of celibacy he took when ordained as a Tendai priest. Shinran perceived in his own life the very image of human existence that Hōnen had preached, one mired in foolishness and wrongdoings. It was in this humble and self-effacing frame of mind that Shinran established himself as a religious seeker and Pure Land teacher in the community of ordinary peasant farmers in the Kantō region.

The introspective views of Hōnen and Shinran were an indirect product of the decline in social mobility in Japan's aristocracy. Consequently, it was not easy to propagate these views among the peasant farmers of the Kantō, who had grown up amid more superstitious and less introspective beliefs. Shinran thus attempted to adapt Pure Land ideas to the concerns of the lower classes by using the dual concepts of "this world" and the "next world" that Hōnen had used. Hōnen originally presented the *nembutsu* as the religious act that one must perform in order to be born into the next world where Buddhahood will be achieved.¹⁹ Shinran stressed the same idea in a slightly different way to show that one is blessed also while living in this world. That blessing comes in the form of an assurance, that one will attain Buddhahood without fail when born into that next world.²⁰

Thus, the reward of Buddhahood in one's next life is paralleled in this life by personal assurance and peace of mind. Shinran taught that whoever enters into this belief is assured of salvation from the first *nembutsu* spoken. After that, whenever the *nembutsu* is invoked, it is not a repetition of this assurance but, rather, an act of gratitude for salvation already assured.²¹ In Shinran's later years, this idea developed further into the doctrine that a person of correct faith is equal to the buddhas and the bodhisattvas.²² In other words, faith accords one the most exalted status possible in this world, even though enlightenment itself has not yet been achieved. In this way, Shinran conveyed the idea of immediate benefits that the Pure Land path offered, without endorsing the mechanistic, superstitious, and magical rewards that the peasant population typically sought in religion. The heart of his teaching, however, was that faith leads to enlightenment in the next world.

Shinran arrived at his beliefs through ever-deeper introspection on

19 *Shōsokumon*, in *Hōnen Ippen*, *NST*, vol. 10, p. 175.

20 *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in *Shinran*, *NST*, vol. 11, pp. 97–100; and *Matōshō*, in *Shinran-shū Nichiren-shū*, *NKBT*, vol. 82, p. 115.

21 *Shinran Shōnin goshōsokushū*, in *Shinran-shū Nichiren-shū*, *NKBT*, vol. 82, p. 167.

22 *Sanjō wasan* and *Matōshō*, in *Shinran-shū Nichiren-shū*, *NKBT*, vol. 82, pp. 62 (*wasan* no. 94), pp. 120–1.

the human condition. While living in his fallen state with his wife and children among the peasant farmers of the Kantō, Shinran focused his attention on the nature and capacity of human beings. Hōnen had asserted that all sentient beings are objects of Amida's salvation, but Shinran continued to seek their true inner nature. In the end, he perceived humans as incapable of anything but wrongdoing. He categorically denied that they had the power to save themselves, and he thus added another dimension to the idea of faith. That is, faith is not a path to salvation through one's own efforts. It is defined, instead, by "other power" (*tariki*), a total reliance on the power of Amida Buddha.

Around the age of sixty, Shinran left the Kantō region and returned to Kyoto, where he spent the last thirty years of his life. There he composed a number of religious works, the foremost of which is his *Kyōgyōshinshō*.²³ Shinran continued to maintain contact with his Kantō disciples through letters and to give them guidance in religious matters. It is clear, however, that he shunned the personal aggrandizement and veneration that his followers often accorded him. Shinran believed that all human beings are equal before Amida Buddha, and he thus refused to accept the exalted role of religious master in which others cast him. His self-abnegation suggests that Shinran had no desire to organize a religious sect of his own. Indeed, that enterprise was undertaken only after his death by his spiritual successors and blood descendants.

Eisai and Dōgen

Shinran and Hōnen formulated their new religious ideas by concentrating on the internal nature of human beings. In their proselytization activities, they separated themselves from the major temples and turned their attention more to the common people and those living in the provinces. Zen, however, emerged along very different lines. During the late Heian period, one segment of Japan's aristocracy began to study the orthodox traditions of Chinese thought, as a way of reinvigorating society. Chinese learning had long been considered the foundation of civilization, especially by the aristocracy, but in the middle of the Heian period, interest in things Chinese waned or existed only in the abstract. By the end of the period, however, interest reemerged in some circles, and priests began to travel to China to visit the important

²³ The formal title of this work is the *Ken jōdo shinjitsu kyōgyōshō monrui*. A first draft of the text was completed by Shinran in 1224. For standard editions of the text, see *Shinran*, *NST*, vol. 11, pp. 7–260; and *TD*, vol. 83, pp. 589–643.

temples and Buddhist sites there.²⁴ Eisai (1141–1215), Chōgen (d. 1195), and Shunjō (1166–1227) were among those who went to China at the beginning of the Kamakura period. They differed in their individual religious views, but they all were united in their attraction to the thought and culture of Sung China. By importing Chinese learning and synthesizing it with their own religious traditions, they hoped to revitalize Buddhism in Japan. It was in this context that Zen was imported from China.

The first person to play an important role in the adoption of Zen was Eisai.²⁵ He was born in 1141 into a prominent family of Shinto priests in Bitchū Province (present-day Okayama Prefecture). Instead of following the family tradition, Eisai entered a Buddhist temple at a young age and was eventually ordained as a Buddhist priest. In his early career he studied Tendai doctrine and *mikkyō* or esoteric Buddhism. Unlike Hōnen, Eisai was not inclined toward withdrawal or religious seclusion on Mount Hiei. Rather, he had strong ambitions to make a name for himself in the Tendai establishment. While studying on Mount Hiei, Eisai began to dream of restoring the Tendai school to the state of religious creativity from which it had declined. That aspiration prompted him to make the arduous journey to China twice and to seek out Buddhism's orthodox teachings there. On his first visit, Eisai discovered that Zen was the dominant form of Buddhism in China. During his second visit, he actually studied Zen. His teacher was Hsüan Huai-ch'ang (Kian Eshō), a master in the Huang-lung (Ōryō) branch of the Lin-chi (Rinzai) school.²⁶

Zen had some influence on the Japanese Tendai school at the time of its founding by Saichō (767–822). This school is often described as an amalgamation of four Buddhist traditions: Tendai doctrine, Zen meditation, Vinaya rules, and *mikkyō* ritual. Eisai believed that among the four, Zen and Vinaya had lapsed into disuse, and Mount Hiei had thus fallen into stagnation.²⁷ Hence, Zen was the first thing he sought to reintroduce from China. The controlling powers at Mount Hiei were not aware of Zen's ascendant position in China and therefore refused to recognize the new teachings that Eisai propounded and even attempted

24 Mori Katsumi, *Mori Katsumi chosaku senshū*, vol. 4: *Nissō bunka kōryū no shomondai* (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1975), pp. 167–202.

25 Concerning Eisai's life, see Taga Munchaya, *Eisai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1965).

26 *Kōzen gokokuron*, in *Chūsei Zenka no shisō*, *NST*, vol. 16, pp. 53–54; and *Genkō shakusho*, *KT*, vol. 31, pp. 43–46. The Lin-chi branch was founded by Lin-chi I-hsüan (d. 867) and was the most powerful branch of Zen in China during the Sung period.

27 *Kōzen gokokuron*, in *Chūsei Zenka no shisō*, *NST*, vol. 16, pp. 16–48.

to suppress them. In response to their opposition, Eisai wrote his primary work, the *Kōzen gokokuron*, in which he defended Zen as a teaching that would preserve and uphold the nation rather than undermine it.²⁸ Despite his protestations, the established authorities on Mount Hiei were unwilling to permit Zen to be taught there. Fortunately, however, the leaders of the newly established bakufu, or military government, in Kamakura expressed an interest in it and accorded Eisai the institutional support and patronage necessary to establish Zen as a religious tradition in Japan. The bakufu recognized the power and influence of Sung China and hoped to use Eisai's knowledge of Chinese thought and culture to lend prestige and authority to its own rule.

Zen originated in China in the mid-T'ang period. As a school of Buddhism, it bore the strong imprint of Chinese culture. China and Japan had close ties during the Nara period, and Zen was first introduced into Japan at that time. But it was difficult for the Japanese to comprehend Zen because of its mystical qualities and its highly developed mental training. Zen was reintroduced on several other occasions during the Heian period, but it never managed to take root as an independent school. Only in the late Heian period, when the religious authority of Mount Hiei was shaken and Kamakura's religious revolution took shape, was the climate right for Zen to be accepted.

Eisai and other early Zen priests in Japan inherited the fundamental Zen principle that the absolute must be grasped through direct intuitive experience within the mind, not through the aid of the written word. But they tended to couch Zen's mystical aspects in the context of *mikkyō*, or esoteric Buddhism. The two were similar in that both preserved their teachings through private master-disciple transmissions, and they conveyed the absolute through symbolic acts of ritual and discipline. The arrival of Zen from China, therefore, played a role in reshaping and bolstering esoteric Buddhist thought, which had flourished throughout the Heian period. With the appearance of Dōgen, however, Zen assumed a more revolutionary guise and began to emerge as a strain of Kamakura Buddhism itself.

Dōgen (1200–53) was the son of the court noble and politician Tsuchimikado Michichika.²⁹ As a child, Dōgen was surrounded by

²⁸ This was Eisai's most important treatise and the first work on Zen composed in Japan. For standard editions of the text, see *Kōzen gokokuron*, in *Chūsei Zenka no shisō*, *NST*, vol. 16, pp. 7–97; and *TD*, vol. 80, pp. 1–17.

²⁹ Concerning Dōgen's life, see Imaeda Aishin, *Dōgen: sono kōdō to shishō* (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1970); and Ōkubo Dōshū, *Dōgen zenji den no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1953).

high-ranking aristocrats and well-known literary figures, and so he received a superior and extensive education. Both of his parents died while he was still young, and as a result, Dōgen decided to take up the life of a priest on Mount Hiei. In disposition, Dōgen was fervent in his religious pursuits and intent on discovering Buddhism's essence, but the Buddhism he found on Mount Hiei failed to give satisfying answers to the questions he asked.

Dōgen's entire experience on Mount Hiei differed significantly from that of the other originators of Kamakura Buddhism: First, by Dōgen's time Mount Hiei was beginning to lose credibility as the hub of Buddhism in Japan. Second, Dōgen was never dependent on Mount Hiei for social mobility, as were Hōnen, Eisai, and other priests from the provinces. For them, Mount Hiei was an entry into Japan's intellectual and cultural circles. But for Dōgen, who came from the highest aristocracy, studying the doctrines of Buddhism and mastering the scholarship of the Chinese and Japanese classics were never the only alternative. Hōnen and Shinran spent considerable time in doctrinal training on Mount Hiei, and the scriptures and commentaries they encountered there became, through reinterpretation, the springboard for their own religious ideas. Dōgen, by contrast, quickly abandoned Mount Hiei in his search for true Buddhism, and his disillusionment with Buddhism there prompted him to travel to China in 1223.

In China, Dōgen was not attracted to the most popular form of Zen, the Lin-chi (Rinzai) school, which had extensive ties with the highest echelons of secular society. Instead, he gravitated toward the Ts'ao-tung (Sōtō) school, which had maintained a strong monastic and antiseccular flavor since its inception in the T'ang period. After training in Zen meditation at the T'ien-t'ung-shan monastery under the Ts'ao-tung master Ch'ang-weng Ju-ching (Chōō Nyōjō, 1163–1228) Dōgen underwent a religious experience that his master certified as a state of enlightenment.

Dōgen then returned to Japan to impart the Zen teachings there. Earlier, Eisai had propounded a brand of Zen that was intermixed with other forms of Buddhism. Dōgen, by contrast, rejected other types of Buddhism and maintained that the religious absolute could be realized only through Zen in its purest form.³⁰ His claim was that a person achieves enlightenment only by sitting in meditation and that meditation itself is indistinguishable from the actual state of enlightenment.³¹

³⁰ *Fukan zazengi*, TD, vol. 82, pp. 1–2.

³¹ *Shōbōgenzō*, "Bendōwa" chapter, in *Dōgen*, pt. 1, NST, vol. 12, p. 20.

In Japan, Dōgen first made his religious base at a temple in Uji on the outskirts of Kyoto. There he offered instruction in meditation to an ever-increasing number of Zen aspirants. But because of Mount Hiei's opposition to his teachings, Dōgen was eventually forced to retreat to Echizen Province (present-day Fukui Prefecture) to continue his activities.

Dōgen's primary work, the *Shōbōgenzō*, is a collection of essays presented as lectures to his disciples.³² The essays date from the time he resided at Uji until shortly before his death. The *Shōbōgenzō* reveals the sophisticated level of speculative thought of which Dōgen was capable. In it he addresses some of Buddhism's fundamental questions: What is the essence of Buddhahood? What constitutes true religious practice? What is the nature of time? In addition to the *Shōbōgenzō*, Dōgen composed several works defining the rules and etiquette governing monastic conditions and the daily life of religious practitioners.³³ He formulated these in an attempt to put into practice what his teacher had taught him in China. Dōgen sought to separate Zen from the political intrigues in which the religious authorities on Mount Hiei and the great temples of Nara engaged. Even though they had dominated Japanese Buddhism throughout the Heian period, Dōgen considered Sōtō Zen to be the quintessential form of Buddhism. The basic theme of his teachings was that one should fervently seek the absolute and diligently practice meditation. Based on that principle, Dōgen scrupulously avoided dealing with the secular powers, and he produced one of Japan's most sublime religious philosophies.

Nichiren and Ippen

The last of Kamakura Buddhism's seminal figures, Nichiren and Ippen, appeared well after the religious revolution began. Although their teachings differed profoundly from each other, the way that they adapted them to the Japanese context was similar. This element of adaptation and concern for the immediate world stands out more prominently in their ideas than in those of earlier Kamakura thinkers. The Pure Land teachings of Hōnen and Shinran, for example, present

³² The *Shōbōgenzō*, written in classical Japanese, is the most comprehensive account of Dōgen's ideas. Its contents were assembled from his sermons and lectures. For the standard seventy-five and ninety-five fascicle editions of the *Shōbōgenzō*, see *Dōgen*, pts. 1 and 2, *NST*, vols. 12–13; and *TD*, vol. 82, pp. 7–309. ³³ *Eihei shingi*, *TD*, vol. 82, pp. 319–42.

salvation as occurring not in the present world but in the Pure Land after death. Dōgen's teachings are built around the experience of an ineffable absolute and thus display little concern for the existing secular order or for guiding people in how to live in it. Nichiren and Ippen, on the other hand, couched their ideas in down-to-earth terms and formulated a religious path that melded Buddhism with the immediate experiences of the Japanese.

This last stage in the development of Kamakura Buddhism occurred amid conditions different from those of the first stage. Major changes were at work in Japan's social and religious spheres in the middle of the thirteenth century, some fifty years after Hōnen appeared on the scene. The first important change was in the aristocracy. In Hōnen's time, new forms of religious thought came directly out of the aristocracy. They arose from a deep sense of alarm among the aristocrats and literati over the crumbling of the established order. But by the middle of the thirteenth century this situation had changed. It was no longer possible to hide the fact that the aristocracy itself was in a state of precipitous decline. The aristocrats withdrew from the religious forefront to work out their convictions in isolation. They came to view themselves as the bastion of Japanese culture and the preservers of tradition. At this stage, the aristocrats no longer functioned as active agents in creating Japan's new religious ideas.

The second change was the widespread dissemination of Buddhist doctrines among the samurai and common people. This occurred primarily through the efforts of the Kamakura Buddhist proselytizers. The rise of Kamakura Buddhism was paralleled by the emergence of a new social order in which the samurai class asserted considerable influence. But successful samurai were not the only ones attracted to the new Buddhist movement. Even samurai who languished on the fringes of the new social order, as well as ordinary peasants, found comfort and salvation in the new teachings.

The third change was the appearance of new religious organizations. As various branches of Pure Land and Zen Buddhism became more active, they generated rudimentary religious organizations that offered an alternative to the orthodox schools of Mount Hiei and Nara. The more people that affiliated with these groups, the more that the Buddhist establishment lost its monopoly over organized religion.

The fourth and final change was the redefinition of Shinto beliefs in the light of Buddhism. There was widespread social turmoil in the villages from the end of the Heian period through the Kamakura. During the fourteenth century, new villages came into existence, and

the villages' social structure as a whole was transformed. Amid this ferment, Shinto, the villages' indigenous religion, also began to change. Shinto shrines were the functional centers of people's faith, and so tales were compiled about the origins of the shrines and the miraculous works of their *kami*. These tales were used to proclaim the power of local *kami* to people living in distant regions. Buddhism provided the conceptual framework for these tales.³⁴ All of the changes that occurred during the mid-Kamakura period created a climate favorable to religious innovation, quite unlike that encountered by Hōnen and the early Kamakura religious figures.

Nichiren (1222–82) played an important role in this last stage of Kamakura Buddhism's development.³⁵ He was born into a family of minor samurai in Awa Province (present-day Chiba Prefecture). In order to receive an education, Nichiren entered a temple near his birthplace and studied Tendai doctrine. Eventually, he went to Mount Hiei for training. Nichiren's principal doctrinal interest was not in a "next-world" form of salvation, such as rebirth in the Pure Land, but rather in a "this-world" form of salvation that would perfect and liberate the Japanese, both individually and as a nation. Therefore, the teachings that Nichiren propounded were meant to guide both spiritual and political affairs and also to ensure the country's peace and tranquility.³⁶ While studying the Tendai doctrine, Nichiren discovered in the Lotus Sutra (Hokekyō) the image of the absolute that would become the basis of his teachings.³⁷ He came to believe that the truth and power of the Lotus Sutra are concentrated in the title of the sutra itself, and he therefore taught that salvation can be attained by chanting, "I take refuge in the Lotus Sutra." In structure, his teachings bear certain similarities to those of Hōnen and Shinran, in that all claim that a person is confirmed in faith by intoning a sacred name.

Nichiren became convinced that he had been assigned the task of realizing the Lotus Sutra's ideal in this world, and he stood ready to do battle with anyone who obstructed that end. Perceiving himself to be a specially ordained prophet, Nichiren launched vitriolic attacks against

34 *Chūsei Shintō ron*, *NST*, vol. 19; and *Jisha engi*, *NST*, vol. 20.

35 Concerning Nichiren's life, see Takagi Yutaka, *Nichiren: sono kōdō to shisō* (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1970).

36 *Risshō ankokuron*, in *Shinran-shū Nichiren-shū*, *NKBT*, vol. 82, p. 293.

37 The Lotus Sutra, known in Sanskrit as the Saddharma Pundarika Sūtra, is one of the most important religious texts in Mahāyāna Buddhism. It was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Kumārajīva in 406. The complete title of the scripture in Japanese is *Myōhō rengekyō*, *TD*, vol. 9, pp. 1–62. This sutra has been extremely popular as a religious text throughout Chinese and Japanese history. It is the fundamental scripture of the Tendai school.

the teachings of the Pure Land, Zen, Shingon, and Ritsu schools. The harshness of his diatribes was unprecedented in Japan's religious history, and eventually Nichiren was arrested by the Kamakura bakufu and exiled for three years to the island of Sado (in present-day Niigata Prefecture).³⁸ Nichiren believed that through chanting the title of the Lotus Sutra persons in this world would be bound together in a perfect and transformed society. Despite the many teachings of Buddhism, he embraced the Lotus Sutra exclusively, and he asserted that anyone is capable of the simple practice of chanting its title.³⁹ This exclusiveness of outlook and simplicity of practice are what place Nichiren's teachings within the framework of Kamakura Buddhism.

Among the Kamakura Buddhist thinkers, Nichiren was the first to integrate secular matters and Shinto *kami* into his Buddhist scheme, for he believed that Buddhism undergirds reality in all its dimensions. The writings of Hōnen, Shinran, and Dōgen rarely address the immediate concerns of ordinary people. Instead, they focus on doctrinal questions such as Amida Buddha's compassion or on transcendent experiences such as Zen enlightenment. Nichiren, by contrast, actively propounded an ethic for life in this world that was relevant to both the samurai class and the common people. His teachings, in fact, incorporated various elements from Confucian morality and Shinto piety. Before Nichiren's time, Buddhist priests tended to concentrate on scripture, exegesis, and doctrine. Nichiren departed from this pattern by trying to explain Buddhism in more pedestrian terms and by amalgamating it with other varieties of thought popular in his day. Among the schools of Kamakura Buddhism, Nichiren's in particular helped create a form of Buddhism well adapted to the Japanese context. Through this adaptation, Buddhism became accessible to far more people than ever before.

Ippen (1239–89), a proponent of Pure Land Buddhism and a contemporary of Nichiren, was another religious figure who synthesized Buddhism with various popular beliefs and practices.⁴⁰ Ippen was the son of a samurai in Iyo Province (present-day Ehime Prefecture). He was ordained at a young age and at first studied Tendai doctrine. Later he went to study under someone named Shōtatsu, who had been a follower of Hōnen's disciple Shōkū (1177–1247).

38 *Shuju gofurumai goshō*, in *Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun*, vol. 2 (Minobu-san, Yamanashi-ken: Kuonji, 1953), p. 963.

39 *Senjishō* and *Hōonshō*, in *Nichiren, NST*, vol. 14, pp. 233, 297.

40 Concerning Ippen's life, see Ōhashi Shunnō, *Ippen* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1983).

Ippen eventually formulated his own version of the Pure Land teachings, and he is commonly recognized as the last of the originators of Kamakura Buddhism. Ippen's initial inspiration was an oracle he received from the Shinto deity at Kumano Shrine in Kii Province (present-day Wakayama Prefecture). This *kami* had long been identified in popular culture as a manifestation of Amida Buddha. Ippen's experience at Kumano reflects the strong affinity between his teachings and the indigenous Japanese beliefs. The oracle stated that rebirth in the Pure Land is assured only if one chants Amida's name fervently. It does not matter whether one has faith or whether one is tainted with wrongdoings.⁴¹ The *nembutsu* that one chants transcends all human intention. It should be intoned single-mindedly and without distraction. Ippen maintained that one should set aside all religious practices except the *nembutsu*, for then one's trust in it will be perfect.⁴² He himself discarded all other practices and thus came to be known as the *sutehijiri*, "the discarding holy man." To propagate these beliefs, Ippen traveled the length of Japan, from Kyushu in the south to Tōhoku in the north, and distributed amulets inscribed with the *nembutsu* to every person he met.⁴³

Ippen's teachings stress first and foremost a simple religious practice, as do all forms of Kamakura Buddhism. In the case of Hōnen and Shinran, however, the need for introspection and reflection underlies this simple practice. Ippen, by contrast, did not focus on the believer's underlying mental state. Rather, he emphasized the primacy of religious practice and its power to elicit "single-mindedness without distraction" from the believer. This stress on religious practice was well suited to Ippen's style of proselytization.

In the villages that Ippen and his religious cohorts visited, he would gather congregations to intone the *nembutsu* and dance to its rhythm.⁴⁴ Ordinary people were thus exposed to the elements of religion as they participated in the dancing and *nembutsu* chanting. These were easier for them to assimilate than were the subtle teachings of Hōnen and Shinran, even though they also presented a message with strong popular appeal. Ippen, more than any of the priests before him, came into direct contact with the masses as he traveled from place to place in an

41 *Ippen Shōnin goroku*, in *Hōnen Ippen*, *NST*, vol. 10, p. 305. Kumano Shrine, located in the southern half of the Kii peninsula in Wakayama Prefecture, has been regarded as a sacred spot since ancient times and has been visited by countless pilgrims over the centuries.

42 *Ippen hijirie*, in *Nihon emakimono zenshū*, vol. 10 (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1960), "Shisho," p. 66.

43 *Ibid.* This work gives a pictorial image of Ippen as he traveled to these various regions.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

endless evangelistic sojourn. He managed to communicate Buddhism to the people as a path of salvation, by integrating it with practices they could understand. Even while seeking salvation in Buddhism, the common people retained their native Shinto religious beliefs. Ippen was open and responsive to Shinto, and he incorporated various beliefs and practices associated with the *kami* into his own religious paradigm.⁴⁵ In so doing, he made his teachings compatible with the spiritual inclinations on the ordinary people. Throughout Japanese history, it was necessary for Buddhism to come to terms with Japan's indigenous religious traditions in order for it to spread widely. Nichiren's and Ippen's teachings accomplished this synthesis better than those of the earlier Kamakura thinkers, as both molded Buddhism to fit the popular religious consciousness of the Japanese.

THE RESPONSE OF THE BUDDHIST ESTABLISHMENT

An awakening in the traditional schools

The various groups that arose out of Kamakura Buddhism generated formal religious organizations during the Muromachi period. From that time on, they have been the most powerful schools of Buddhism in Japan. In reflecting on their origins, all of these schools hark back to the Kamakura period as their institutional starting point, and they claim a continuous and unbroken existence since that time. There is a tendency among them to overestimate the power and influence of Kamakura Buddhism at this embryonic stage in its history. Their perspective is one of historical hindsight – that is, looking back on the period from the vantage point of later times. If one looks at the Kamakura period without this sectarian predilection, one will find that the various schools of Kamakura Buddhism had no institutional influence at that time, for their religious organizations had not yet taken substantive shape. The earlier schools of Buddhism from Nara and Heian times were, in fact, still paramount in the Kamakura period. These established schools were both challenged and threatened, however, by the rise of Kamakura Buddhism, and they responded vigorously with political and religious initiatives of their own.

The Tendai school exerted the greatest influence in Buddhist circles throughout the Heian period. By Kamakura times the elite within the

⁴⁵ In every region to which Ippen traveled, he would visit the local Shinto shrine and pray to its *kami*. See Tamura Enchō, *Nihon Bukkyō shisōshi kenkyū: Jōdokyōhen* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1959), pp. 403–4.

school, like much of Japan's aristocratic elite, was locked in a conservative mind-set dedicated to preserving the status quo, but up to the mid-Heian period, when the talented scholar-priest Annen lived, the school had been a vibrant, creative center of grand doctrinal formulations. The doctrinal system that gained the greatest prominence in the Tendai school was the philosophy of original enlightenment (*hongaku shisō*). Original enlightenment, which has always been a central tenet in Mahāyāna Buddhism, refers to the idea that every living being has the innate capacity to attain Buddhahood. One is saved at the very moment that one comprehends this fact. Hence, enlightenment is immanent and immediate, although people do not ordinarily realize its presence.⁴⁶ The concept of original enlightenment directly contrasts with the idea of acquired enlightenment (*shigaku shisō*). According to this doctrine, enlightenment requires one to progress through stages of religious practice from the time one enters the Buddhist path until one attains Buddhahood. The religious practices at each stage are geared to the individual's abilities.

In the Tendai school the doctrine of original enlightenment resulted in the belief that enlightenment is omnipresent. All things are vessels of enlightenment, even though they may appear to be discrete and unrelated objects. Even things that stand in diametric opposition to one another are not ultimately at odds. At base they are identical, for they embody the same essence. This philosophy provided a rationale for affirming all things in their present state, and it fit well with Tendai's mystical aspect, wherein every form, just as it is, is perceived as a manifestation of the absolute. Mystical truths of this kind were not to be revealed capriciously, as religious preparation and training were necessary to understand them. Consequently, secret oral transmissions developed in the Tendai school as a way of imparting these truths between master and disciple.

Various fragmentary works that appeared in the early Kamakura period came out of this tradition, containing teachings that hitherto had been transmitted either orally or in secret.⁴⁷ The Tendai school suffered a decline in doctrinal creativity during the second half of the Heian period, at the same time that Mount Hiei increased its involvement in worldly affairs. Kamakura Buddhism arose in part as a critique of these involvements and as a search for a purer form of reli-

⁴⁶ Tamura Yoshirō, "Tendai hongaku shisō gaisetsu," in *Tendai hongaku ron, NST*, vol. 9, pp. 477–548.

⁴⁷ Some examples of these works are the *Tendai Hokkeshū gozu hōmon yōsan* and the *Kankō ruijū*, in *Tendai hongaku ron, NST*, vol. 9, pp. 23–40, 187–286.

gion. Nonetheless, the Tendai philosophy of original enlightenment exerted a strong influence on the new and emergent forms of Buddhism. In fact, all the originators of Kamakura Buddhism studied on Mount Hiei at one time or another.

The other powerful schools of Buddhism in the Kamakura period were the Shingon school and the schools affiliated with the major temples in Nara, such as the Kegon, Hossō, Sanron, and Ritsu schools. All of these schools boasted long traditions, and each exercised considerable authority in both doctrinal and political affairs. In the Nara schools a large number of monk scholars continued the venerable enterprise of articulating and elaborating sectarian doctrine.

One representative figure from Nara who was active at the beginning of the Kamakura period was Jōkei (1155–1213).⁴⁸ He is best known as a systematizer of Hossō doctrine, but he was interested in Pure Land and Zen teachings as well. He attempted to incorporate the *nembutsu* and Zen meditation into the religious practices of his school in order to adapt it to the changing times. Jōkei's disciple Ryōhen (1194–1252), who was instrumental in formulating a system of Hossō doctrine that was uniquely Japanese, followed a similar pattern. He was a student of Zen and was also attracted to the new trends found in the *nembutsu* teachings and in Tendai.⁴⁹

Another important figure, Myōe (1173–1232) of the Kegon school, was likewise influenced by Zen and the *nembutsu*.⁵⁰ Myōe wrote a work entitled *Zaijarin* that criticized Hōnen's major treatise, the *Senchakushū*.⁵¹ He did so not because he rejected the *nembutsu* as a practice but because he disagreed with Hōnen's unorthodox interpretation of it.

The Buddhism centered at the great temples in Nara has come to be known as "old Buddhism" (*kyū Bukkyō*), in contrast with the "new Buddhism" (*shin Bukkyō*) of the Kamakura period. There is a tendency to regard the former as a reactionary form of Buddhism opposed to the revolutionary trends of Kamakura Buddhism. But it is clear that the very people defending the traditional doctrines and criticizing the new schools were also heavily influenced by Zen and the *nembutsu*, and they were likewise working toward a practicable form of religion. In short, the religious revolution that occurred in the Kamakura period

48 Concerning Jōkei, see Tanaka Hisao, "Chosakusha ryakuden," in *Kamakura kyū Bukkyō*, *NST*, vol. 15, pp. 461–9.

49 Concerning Ryōhen, see Tanaka, "Chosakusha ryakuden," pp. 480–8.

50 Concerning Myōe's life, see Tanaka Hisao, *Myōe* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1961).

51 *Zaijarin*, in *Kamakura kyū Bukkyō*, *NST*, vol. 15, pp. 43–105. This work, containing three fascicles, was composed in 1212, one year after Hōnen's death.

not only created new schools of Buddhism but also transformed the old ones.

One other trend that surfaced in the established Buddhist schools as a result of this revolution was a movement to reassert adherence to religious precepts (*kairitsu*).⁵² Prominent figures in this movement included Jōkei, his disciple Kakushin (1168–1243), Myōe, and Shunjō (1166–1227), a priest of the Ritsu school who resided in Kyoto.⁵³ There were two motives for emphasizing religious precepts. One was to reestablish spiritual purity as the aim of the Buddhist priests. In that state, priests could function as role models for the populace at large and thereby could once more assume their proper place as spiritual leaders in society. This social role was connected to the second reason for administering religious precepts: to lead all people, as the objects of proselytization, to salvation.⁵⁴ Implicit in the first reason was an attack on Buddhism's laxity and worldliness. Implicit in the second was the idea that priests are the propagators of Buddhism and should be active among the people. The goal of this movement was to propel the established Buddhist schools out of their moribund state.

A widely acclaimed figure in the precept movement was the Ritsu priest Eizon (1201–90).⁵⁵ He revived the Saidaiji temple in Nara and strove to make it a center of the Ritsu school where religious precepts in one form or another were administered. One distinguishing feature of Eizon's proselytization efforts was a ceremony that he instituted in which people would promise to uphold the precepts. Gradually there emerged the popular belief that anyone who underwent this ceremony would be saved. Eizon's disciple Ninshō (1217–1303) was also involved in the movement, but instead of trying to save people individually by administering precepts to them, he emphasized the broader social responsibilities incumbent on the clergy because of their precepts.⁵⁶ Ninshō organized a wide variety of social works such as building roads and bridges, digging wells, and looking after the sick. In order to make the most out of these social activities, Ninshō established ties with political authorities and enlisted

52 Concerning this movement, see Ishida Mizumaro, *Nihon Bukkyō ni okeru kairitsu no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Nakayama shobō, 1976).

53 Concerning Shunjō's life, see *Sennyūji Fukaki Hōshi den*, in *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1927), pp. 45–58.

54 Ōsumi Kazuo, "Kamakura Bukkyō to sono kakushin undō," in *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975), p. 232.

55 Concerning Eizon's life, see Wajima Yoshio, *Eizon Ninshō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1970). 56 Concerning Ninshō's life, see Wajima, *Eizon Ninshō*.

their assistance and protection in implementing his programs. In this way he differed from most of the leaders of Kamakura Buddhism, who wished to have as little contact as possible with the world of politics.

The suppression of Kamakura Buddhism

The established schools of Buddhism were challenged by the innovations of Kamakura's new religious movements, and they responded with such activities as those described, in an attempt to revitalize their own religious traditions. Buddhist authorities were also disturbed by certain beliefs and practices circulating in Kamakura Buddhism, and they reacted aggressively in the name of Buddhist orthodoxy to suppress them. One early example of suppression was their response to Hōnen's followers.

Within the Pure Land movement, some converts to Hōnen's teachings formed fanatic *nembutsu* groups. Their claim was that if one simply practiced the *nembutsu* and had faith in Amida Buddha's compassion, then one would be assured of rebirth in Pure Land, no matter what evil deeds or wrongdoings one might commit.⁵⁷ Such views were anathema to both the Buddhist establishment and the civil authorities. Therefore, they frequently joined forces to institute measures that would check the spread of the Pure Land movement. The first measure was instituted in 1200 when the Kamakura bakufu ordered the expulsion of all *nembutsu* priests from Kamakura.⁵⁸ The next came in 1204 when Mount Hiei led the other major temples in petitioning the imperial court to ban Hōnen's teaching of the exclusive *nembutsu*. Hōnen defended himself by declaring that what he taught in no way undermined the established order, and he warned his followers not to act in an inflammatory way.⁵⁹ On that occasion Hōnen followers managed to escape suppression. In 1206, however, the Kōfukuji temple in Nara submitted to the imperial court a set of nine accusations against Hōnen and his cohorts, entitled the *Kōfukuji sōjō*, drafted by Jōkei.⁶⁰ As support for Hōnen eroded among court nobles, suppression became inevitable. It finally occurred in the following year when Junsai and several other disciples of Hōnen were sentenced to death and

57 Inoue Mitsusada, *Nihon kodai no kokka to Bukkyō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1971), pp. 280–8.

58 *Azuma kagami, KT*, vol. 32, p. 574. See also Inoue, *Nihon kodai no kokka to Bukkyō*, pp. 284–5.

59 *Shichikajō kishōmon*, in *Hōnen Ippen, NST*, vol. 10, pp. 231–5.

60 *Kōfukuji sōjō*, in *Kamakura kyū Bukkyō, NST*, vol. 15, pp. 31–42.

when Hōnen, Shinran, and other *nembutsu* proponents were banished from the capital to different parts of Japan.⁶¹

One of the unexpected consequences of this suppression was that it provided the context for Shinran's own religious maturation. The suppression set in motion a sequence of events that led Shinran to settle in the Kantō region and to work out his religious convictions there.⁶² To the extent that these convictions were established in an atmosphere of religious duress, the tenets of Kamakura Buddhism were often framed in opposition to established Buddhist doctrines. These doctrinal divergences only heightened the reputation of the new Buddhist schools as opponents of ecclesiastical authority.

Suppression was by no means limited to the Pure Land movement. Zen was also a periodic target in the early Kamakura period. The first attacks on Zen were directed not at Eisai or Dōgen but at a priest named Nōnin, who studied Zen meditation independently before Eisai became an active proponent. Nōnin formed his own sectarian group known as the Daruma school, named after the semilegendary founder of Zen in China.⁶³ Soon after its formation, Mount Hiei expressed its opposition to the school and initiated repressive measures against it. The reasons given were similar to the charges leveled against Hōnen: that Nōnin stressed Zen meditation to the exclusion of all other religious practices, that he attached little importance to the religious precepts that priests were obliged to obey, and that he denounced other schools of Buddhism. Mount Hiei was the greatest defender of orthodoxy among the eight schools of Buddhism and enjoyed the official recognition of the imperial court. It thus was determined to defend the religious system of the eight against anyone who threatened their authority or deviated from their norm. Hence, it was only natural that after its attack on Nōnin, Mount Hiei would attack Eisai and Dōgen as well.

Eisai first began propagating Zen after his return from Sung China. In 1194 the imperial court, at the behest of Mount Hiei, issued an order banning Nōnin's Daruma school, and this ban was applied to Eisai activities also.⁶⁴ Although Eisai's Zen was originally a target for suppression, he was determined to lift it into the ranks of socially

61 *Dai Nihon shiryō*, pt. 4, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Tōkyō teikoku daigaku, 1909), pp. 504–89 (entry for Jōgen first year, second month, eighteenth day).

62 Kasahara Kazuo, *Shinran to iōgoku nōnin* (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1957), pp. 145–85.

63 Concerning Nōnin, see Tsuji Zennosuke, *Nihon Bukkyōshi*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1960), pp. 61–66.

64 *Hyakurenshō, KT*, vol. 11, p. 125. See also Tsuji, *Nihon Bukkyōshi*, vol. 3, pp. 70.

acceptable religion, by demonstrating that Zen is not detrimental to the nation but, rather, beneficial. Eisai insisted that the efflorescence of Zen would revitalize the Tendai school. As aristocrats came to realize that Zen occupied the mainstream of Buddhism in China, they had a gradual change of heart toward it.⁶⁵ Eisai's Zen ceased to be an object of suppression when he received official patronage and protection from the Kamakura Bakufu.

Dōgen, on the other hand, differed from Eisai in that he propounded a pure form of Zen, not mixed with beliefs and practices from the orthodox schools. Because of his unyielding devotion to Zen, Dōgen became subject to various kinds of pressure and coercion, especially from Mount Hiei. Dōgen preferred to avoid open confrontation, and so he withdrew to Uji, on the outskirts of Kyoto, to remove himself from Mount Hiei's watchful gaze. In the ensuing years, however, Mount Hiei continued to put pressure on him, even from that distance, and ultimately forced Dōgen in 1242 to retreat to the remote province of Echizen (present-day Fukui Prefecture) to continue his teaching.⁶⁶ Although Dōgen eventually was recognized by the imperial court and the Kamakura bakufu as an eminent Buddhist master, he spent most of his career harassed by Mount Hiei for his uncompromising advocacy of Zen.

These early figures in Kamakura Buddhism all presented teachings that departed in one way or another from orthodox doctrine in Japan. Because of their differences they were suppressed as agitators against the established Buddhist order. Nichiren appeared slightly later than the others, but he suffered a similar fate. In fact, Nichiren received the harshest treatment of all, stemming in part from his abrasive personality. Nichiren was notorious for his fierce and unmitigated attacks, not only on the established Buddhist schools, but also on the *nembutsu* and Zen. These attacks earned Nichiren the wrath of civil and religious authorities, but they also helped him hammer out and define his own convictions and teachings.

The first suppressive measure against Nichiren was his banishment to Izu Province (present-day Shizuoka Prefecture) in 1261.⁶⁷ This action was prompted by Nichiren's presentation to the bakufu of his treatise *Risshō ankokuron*, in which he vehemently denounced the gov-

65 Taga, *Eisai*, pp. 224–84.

66 Imaeda, *Dōgen: sono kōdō to shisō*, pp. 88–89, 137–41.

67 Nichiren was exiled to Izu Province from 1261 to 1263 and to Sado Island from 1271 to 1274. See Takagi, *Nichiren: sono kōdō to shisō*, pp. 75–79.

ernment's policies.⁶⁸ The religious ideal that Nichiren propounded had a strong social and political dimension. In this way it differed from the salvation found in Pure Land and from the experience of enlightenment achieved through Zen meditation. Hence, his suppression may have been more political than religious.

Notwithstanding Nichiren's social and political pronouncements, his teachings had a religious message at their core – that one is saved by chanting the title of the Lotus Sutra. It was this conviction that led Nichiren to criticize the other schools of Buddhism. Many people who embraced his teachings likewise assailed the existing Buddhist system, and their precipitous actions contributed to its decline. The government's second suppression of Nichiren occurred in 1271, just as the Mongols were launching their attack on Japan. Nichiren was arrested for fomenting social unrest, and it was decided that he would be executed. According to Nichiren's own account, however, he managed to escape death because of a miraculous intervention, and instead he was sent into banishment on Sado Island (in present-day Niigata Prefecture). In Sado's desolation and harsh environment Nichiren developed his religious teachings to their fullest.⁶⁹ Thus, as in the case of Shinran, suppression only deepened Nichiren's inner religious experience and propelled him to work out his provocative system of thought.

The harsh reaction of the religious and political establishment to Kamakura Buddhism is demonstrated by the various instances of suppression cited here. The reasons for this response differed according to the particular circumstance of each case and the particular agents instigating each suppression. In some instances, suppression signified an imperially sanctioned assault against those who slighted Buddhism's role as supplicator and ensurer of national tranquillity. In other instances, the attacks arose from doctrinal issues, especially when the teachings of Kamakura Buddhism violated or ignored the formalities of orthodox dogma. In still other instances, suppression was used as a precautionary measure to preclude any acts detrimental to the traditional order that people attracted to Kamakura Buddhism were inclined to commit. The intensity with which some of the suppressions were carried out reflects how determined Mount Hiei and the major temples of Nara were to preserve the traditional Buddhist order they had created.

68 *Risshō ankokuron*, in *Shinran-shū Nichiren-shū*, *NKBT*, vol. 82, pp. 291–318.

69 Inoue, *Nihon kodai no kokka to Bukkyō*, pp. 339–54.

New scholastic trends

In its capacity as the ecclesiastical authority, the Buddhist establishment reacted adversely to various beliefs and practices of Kamakura Buddhism. But Kamakura's radical innovations also spurred many priests, who held fast to the orthodox teachings, to reflect on their own religious traditions. This was truer of the Nara schools than of Mount Hiei. The Tendai school on Mount Hiei was caught up in diverse secular affairs stemming from its extensive connections with aristocratic society in Kyoto during the latter half of the Heian period. Kamakura Buddhism emerged partially in reaction to Mount Hiei's involvements. The major temples in Nara, by contrast, had kept Buddhist scholarship alive and moved toward comprehensive systematizations of Buddhist doctrine. They produced a succession of eminent scholar-priests such as Jōkei and Ryōhen of the Hossō school, Myōhen of the Sanron school, and Myōe of the Kegon school. Together they began a movement that is often described as "the revival of Nara Buddhism" (*Nantō Bukkyō no fukkō*). Without a doubt the appearance of Kamakura Buddhism stimulated Nara's new systematizations of traditional Buddhist doctrine, which were the response of the Nara priests to the changes occurring around them in society.

The resurgence of Buddhist scholasticism was part of the broader current of scholarly pursuits in elite society. Beginning in the mid-Heian period, aristocrats attempted to organize and classify the various forms of knowledge that had developed so far. Editorial projects aiming at the systematic compilation of information became very common. This trend extended to the field of Buddhist doctrine as well. In the latter half of the Heian period, priests at the Kōfukuji temple in Nara began compiling catalogues of Buddhist works such as the *Tōiki dentō mokuroku*⁷⁰ by Eichō (1012–95) and the *Hossō-shū shōso mokuroku*⁷¹ by Zōshun (1104–80). Compiling catalogues relating to Buddhist doctrine helped give order to the vast store of knowledge that Japanese Buddhism had amassed since the Nara period. The catalogues had the effect of making Buddhist doctrinal studies more organized and accessible to outsiders, and they were valuable tools in efforts to systematize Buddhist doctrine. Through the process of doctrinal systematization, the foremost scholar-priests of the early

70 *Tōiki dentō mokuroku*, *TD*, vol. 55, pp. 1145–65.

71 *Hossō-shū shōso mokuroku*, *TD*, vol. 55, pp. 1140–4.

Kamakura period produced a uniquely Japanese version of traditional Buddhist philosophy.

By the end of the Kamakura period, many scholars began to construct outlines of various doctrinal and ritual systems. They provided comprehensive and sometimes encyclopedic overviews of the specific elements in Japanese Buddhism. Chōzen (1217–97) of the Sanron school and Gyōnen (1240–1321) of the Kegon school are good examples of such scholars.⁷² Gyōnen's *Hasshū kōyō*, for instance, outlines the fundamental doctrines of the traditional Buddhist schools in Japan.⁷³ Also, the *Kakuzenshō*⁷⁴ by Kakuzen and the *Asabashō*⁷⁵ by Shōchō (1205–82), which were compiled about this time, give encyclopedic coverage of the ceremonies and monastic decorum of the Tendai and Shingon schools, respectively. Because of their scope, such works became valuable references for Buddhist beliefs and practices. These attempts to systematize all knowledge relating to Japanese Buddhism eventually aroused an interest in Buddhist history also. Shūshō (1202–92) of the Kegon school, for instance, composed a work entitled *Nihon kōsōden yōmonshō*, in which he collected the biographies of eminent priests who had played important roles in the history of Buddhism in Japan.⁷⁶ His disciple Gyōnen also left behind a number of works on Buddhist history, such as the *Sangoku Buppō denzū engi*.⁷⁷ Hence, the systematization of Buddhist doctrine eventually led scholars to historiographical questions as well.

Buddhist scholastic trends over the Kamakura period reveal a gradual shift from the cataloguing of doctrinal literature, to the systematization of diverse forms of knowledge, and finally to the study of Japanese Buddhist history.⁷⁸ When these enterprises are compared with the concerns of the new schools of Kamakura Buddhism, a distinct contrast emerges. The originators of Kamakura Buddhism formed their ideas by making religious experience paramount. They drew their inspiration from their own personal realizations, and they sought a path of salvation that each and every individual could follow. Hence, none of them considered the systematization of traditional Buddhist

72 Concerning Gyōnen's life, see Ōya Tokujō, *Gyōnen Kokushi nempu* (Nara: Tōdaiji kangakuin, 1921).

73 *Hasshū kōyō*, in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho hakkōjo, 1912–22), pp. 7–40. Hereafter *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho* is cited as *DNBZ*.

74 *Kakuzenshō*, *DNBZ*, vols. 45–51. 75 *Asabashō*, *DNBZ*, vols. 35–41.

76 *Nihon kōsōden yōmonshō*, *KT*, vol. 31, pp. 1–92.

77 *Sangoku Buppō denzū engi*, *DNBZ*, vol. 101.

78 Takagi Yutaka, *Kamakura Bukkyōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1982), pp. 177–241.

doctrine to be a matter of overriding concern.⁷⁹ The Buddhist establishment, however, regarded doctrinal questions as fundamental, and as a result it frequently condemned Kamakura Buddhism for its neglect of Buddhist doctrine.⁸⁰

The founders of Kamakura Buddhism did not derive their tenets from analytical interpretation or rational treatment of existing doctrine. Nor did they attempt to couch their ideas in perfect harmony with traditional systems of Buddhist thought.⁸¹ What is more, few of them had any interest in the relationship of their own ideas to other philosophies and religions such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto. Nichiren was the only Kamakura originator to show a strong interest in such questions.⁸²

The original teachings of the founders of Kamakura Buddhism therefore diverged from the interest in Buddhist history that arose in the traditional schools during the latter half of the Kamakura period. In the case of the Kamakura innovators, their starting point was a profound longing for salvation and the religious experience that undergirds it. When they sought to explain their experiences intellectually, they were led back to Buddhist doctrine to discover the concepts and rationale for their beliefs. Traditional priests, on the other hand, considered the study of Buddhist doctrine to be fundamental and accepted its doctrinal framework as the parameters of their inquiry. Only within that framework did they attempt to innovate or to explore variations on basic themes.⁸³

As Kamakura Buddhism emerged with its diverse new movements and as various types of religious and intellectual activities began to appear, the priests at the major temples in Nara were prompted to reflect on the nature of Buddhism in Japan. They sought to comprehend the place of Buddhism and its differing systems of thought.⁸⁴ The interest in Buddhist history that grew out of these circumstances was eventually inherited by such figures as the Rinzai Zen priest

79 Ōsumi, "Kamakura Bukkyō to sono kakushin undō," in *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi*, vol. 5, pp. 236–8.

80 See, for example, *Kōfukuji sōjō*, in *Kamakura kyū Bukkyō*, *NST*, vol. 15, pp. 32–42.

81 The Kamakura founders adopted only those things from traditional doctrine that seemed applicable to and effective in clarifying their own ideas. Hōnen's *Senchaku hongan nembutsushū*, in *Hōnen Ippen*, *NST*, vol. 10, pp. 87–162, exemplifies this idiosyncratic and selective approach to Buddhist doctrine characteristic of them.

82 Tokoro Shigemoto, *Nichiren no shisō to Kamakura Bukkyō* (Tokyo: Fuzambō, 1965), pp. 233–70.

83 Ōsumi Kazuo, "Kamakura Bukkyō to sono kakushin undō," in *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi*, vol. 5, pp. 236–8.

84 The works of Gyōnen in particular are good examples of this trend. See *Hasshū hōyō*, *DNBZ*, vol. 3, pp. 7–40; and *Sangoku Buppō denzū engi*, *DNBZ*, vol. 101.

Kokan Shiren (1278–1346), who modified the approach to Buddhist history pioneered by Shūshō and Gyōnen.⁸⁵ Kokan's work *Genkō shakusho* is a history of Japanese Buddhism in condensed form.⁸⁶ With works of this type, the Japanese first attempted to look at Buddhism in Japan in its entirety and as objectively as possible.⁸⁷

THE FORMATION OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

The attitude of the Kamakura innovators

All of the schools of Kamakura Buddhism passed through various formative stages and eventually succeeded in developing highly structured religious organizations. None of them originated from a schism within the older schools of Buddhism. They had as their starting point the teachings of the Kamakura innovators, who voluntarily severed ties with the established religious institutions of their day. Even during the lifetime of these innovators, rudimentary religious organizations began to coalesce around them. These groups were, by and large, charismatic religious movements based on their teachings. They had specific religious tenets at their core, and they were composed of believers of like conviction. From these loosely structured beginnings, full-fledged religious organizations gradually evolved, known today as the Kamakura schools of Buddhism. This entire process extended many years beyond the lifetime of the innovators, and it resulted not only in the institutionalization of their teachings but also in the idealization of them as founders. Whether or not they ever intended to establish formal sectarian bodies, they ultimately became venerated as the founding fathers of the Kamakura schools.

Kamakura Buddhism presents clear-cut instances in which religious teachings acted as the consolidating agent in the creation of religious organizations. This may seem only natural, but it was not a universal pattern in Japanese history. There are numerous examples before the Kamakura period in which religious organizations developed from communities of priests with special privileges or, in the case of folk religion, from certain well-defined groups in society. Also, in some instances, organized movements arose on the periphery of major religious institutions and incorporated their beliefs and practices.⁸⁸ Beginning only in

85 Concerning Kokan, see Fukushima Shun'ō, *Kokan* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1944).

86 *Genkō shakusho*, *KI*, pt. 2, vol. 31, pp. 1–454.

87 Ōsumi Kazuo, "Genkō shakusho no Buppō kan," *Kanezawa bunko kenkyū* 271 (1983).

88 Examples of such groups are the Pure Land societies that arose in the mid-Heian period,

the Kamakura period, believers straddling various social classes, including the commoner class, banded together around set religious tenets. Social status, institutional ties, and geographical proximity may have been other factors in their consolidation, but the teachings of the Kamakura innovators provided the strongest bond uniting believers in one body. The organizations that they created reached full institutional development later as the schools of Kamakura Buddhism.

With the exception of Ippen, all of the originators of Kamakura Buddhism left behind writings revealing a sophisticated knowledge of Buddhist doctrine. Most of them studied on Mount Hiei while it was still in the twilight of its doctrinal heyday, a time when priests in training might devote ten or twenty years to study. Generally, the Kamakura innovators propounded their new teachings after undergoing some type of revelatory or mystical experience. Hence, they tended to stress the primacy of religious experience. But to the extent that they all were versed in Buddhist scriptures and doctrine, they attempted to undergird these experiential elements with doctrinal explanations. The religious organizations coalesced around their teachings seldom attracted followers with a profound knowledge of Buddhist doctrine. Consequently, believers looked to these originators as the religious specialists of the group. But the articulation of religious tenets per se did not make the Kamakura thinkers the actual founders of a religious body in the sense that later adherents portrayed them. Rather, their teachings simply functioned as a magnet bringing believers together as a group. The more structured and hierarchical aspects of the religious organizations emerged sometime later, after the reputed founders had passed from the scene. During their own lifetime, however, the founders' attitude toward the creation of independent sectarian organizations was far more mixed and varied.

Hōnen and, especially, Shinran present interesting cases in the problems of institutional development in the Kamakura schools. Both of them preached a form of salvation requiring total reliance on the power of Amida Buddha and complete denial of self. Implicit in that view is the repudiation of any qualitative difference between teacher and follower and, by logical extension, the rejection of the hierarchy necessary for setting up a religious organization. This attitude is exhibited in its purest form in Shinran's assertion, preserved in the *Tannishō*, that he was on the same plane with other believers and that

primarily around the Tendai monk Genshin, and the bands of pilgrims that frequented *kannon* sites from the end of the Heian period on.

he shared with them the same faith.⁸⁹ The resistance to formal religious organization intimated in Shinran's statement was one of Kamakura Buddhism's revolutionary characteristics.

Notwithstanding these antiorganizational inclinations, religious bodies did take shape, with the Kamakura originators at their center. This process of formation is seen in the examples of Hōnen and Shinran alike. They themselves functioned as guides and advisers in matters of religious faith but around them revolved a great number of organizers and proselytizers. These people were the ones who consolidated the institutional dimension of Kamakura Buddhism. The originators themselves had no grand vision of organizational expansion. Based on their attitudes, the Pure Land schools did not overtly express any intention of competing with established social organizations, but at the same time they commanded enough popular appeal to create formidable religious bodies.

Compared with those for the Pure Land schools, the conditions for the emergence of the Zen schools differed in many ways. Zen is predicated on the experience of enlightenment. Because of the subtle and elusive nature of enlightenment, various doctrines were devised to explain it, and monastic practices centering on Zen meditation were developed to induce it. Because specialized training and understanding are part of Zen, it is impossible for ordinary members of the organization to stand above the teacher or master. A hierarchy is inherent in the system, and both Eisai and Dōgen received training in these technical aspects of Zen during their travels to monasteries in China.

Eisai, for his part, sought to combine Zen with other forms of Buddhism once he returned to Japan. He regarded Zen as a revitalizing form of religious authority, and he strove to create a place for it within the existing Buddhist schools. Eisai introduced what he had learned in China into the administration of monasteries in Japan, and he attempted to inaugurate a revival of Buddhism by doing so. The new religious organization that Eisai established therefore had roots firmly planted in the old. Consequently, Eisai must be characterized as a reformer at heart who attempted to resuscitate the Tendai school through the importation of Zen.⁹⁰

Dōgen, on the other hand, was critical of combining Zen with other religious elements, as Eisai proposed. Dōgen idealized a strict form of clerical monasticism, and he was not expressly interested in the organi-

89 *Tannishō*, in *Shinran-shū Nichiren-shū, NKBT*, vol. 82, p. 196.

90 Yanagida Seizan, "Eisai to Kōzen gokokuron no kadai," in *Chūsei Zenka no shisō, NST*, vol. 16, pp. 450–80.

zation or expansion of a school of Buddhism. Instead, he confined his attention to the practice of meditation and the attainment of enlightenment, and he tailored his teachings to the needs of the individual monks he trained.⁹¹ Hence, Dōgen's monastic organization, though hierarchical like Eisai's, was not integrated into the established social and religious network as Eisai's was. The differing institutional concerns of the two are best reflected in the fact that Eisai actively sought ties with the political authorities, whereas Dōgen turned his back on the world of secular affairs.

Nichiren, who appeared late in Kamakura Buddhism, differed considerably from the other four religious innovators before him. He was a religious genius in his own right who produced Buddhist ideas that were totally new and unique to Japan. But compared with that of the other Kamakura originators, Nichiren's period of formal doctrinal training was somewhat shorter. As a result, his ideas were not as fully systematized into traditional doctrinal form.⁹² Nichiren tended to stress religious experience more than doctrinal matters, and hence he was more directly involved in creating a religious sect. In this respect he was closer to being an actual sectarian founder than were the other Kamakura innovators.

The last of the Kamakura figures, Ippen, was an exception to the general pattern established by his predecessors. He differed, first, in that his original inspiration contained a Shinto dimension: a revelation received from the Shinto deity of Kumano Shrine. Ippen's second difference was that he repudiated doctrinal systematization and instead invested his energies in proselytization activities.⁹³ His third difference was that in his proselytization efforts he did not root himself in a single location but traveled continuously from place to place. Neither Ippen's peripatetic life-style nor his lack of a doctrinal corpus of writings lent itself to the establishment of a religious organization.

The institutional evolution of the Kamakura schools

Religious organizations took embryonic shape around the originators of Kamakura Buddhism, but the Kamakura schools themselves achieved full institutional form only through the efforts of countless religious organizers, long after the founders were gone. What reli-

91 *Shōbōgenzō*, in *Dōgen*, pt. 1, *NST*, vol. 12, pp. 165–231; and in *Dōgen*, pt. 2, *NST*, vol. 13, pp. 298–302.

92 Ienaga Saburō, *Chūsei Bukkyō shisōshi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1957), pp. 66–109.

93 *Ippen Shōnin goroku*, in *Hōnen Ippen*, *NST*, vol. 10, p. 348.

gious organizers had to do in order to give structure to these movement was to universalize the ideas that the Kamakura originators derived from personal experiences and to refashion them in a logical way that would appeal to the largest number of people. Part of that was actually accomplished by the originators themselves in their doctrinal writings. Among them Ippen was the only one who did not translate his experience into doctrinal tenets. Immediately before his death he burned all the writings and religious texts that he possessed. Nevertheless, Ippen's successor Shinkyō (1237–1319), who had long traveled with Ippen on his religious sojourns, set about framing his beliefs in a doctrinal format that would be passed down in subsequent periods.⁹⁴

In instances in which the originator did formulate his doctrine, there was no assurance that it would preserve organizational cohesion in the movement he left behind. For example, Hōnen, the pioneer of Kamakura Buddhism, produced a distinct doctrinal corpus, but soon disagreements arose among his followers as to how to interpret his ideas. In the end there emerged sharp doctrinal differences among his major disciples: Kōsai (1163–1247), Ryūkan (1148–1227), Shōkū (1171–1247), Benchō (1162–1238), and Shinran. Many of these priests drew concepts that they had learned before they ever met Hōnen, in order to recast his beliefs into a systematic body of doctrine.

As a result, interpretive differences put Hōnen's disciples at odds with one another after his death. The influential ones ultimately produced religious organizations of their own and were recognized as sectarian founders in their own right.⁹⁵ The unity that Hōnen's religious organization had while he was still living was quickly shattered once he was gone. The same tendency was quite pronounced in Nichiren's following, too. There were many elements in Nichiren's thinking that were not spelled out doctrinally. Furthermore, his career was filled with upheaval and commotion, and so his own ideas changed frequently according to the events of his life. The result was that his disciples differed in how they comprehended his teachings and what elements they were attracted to, depending on what period of his life they spent with him. Soon after Nichiren's death, his religious organization was divided into six branches, each with a major disciple at its head: Nisshō (1221–1323?), Nichirō (1243–1320), Nikkō (1246–

94 Ōhashi Shunnō, *Jishū no seiritsu to tenkai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1973), pp. 83–99.

95 Yasui Kōdo, *Hōnen monka no kyōgaku* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1968); and Itō Yuishin, *Jōdoshū no seiritsu to tenkai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1981), pp. 135–97.

1332), Nikkō (different characters, 1253–1314), Nitchō (1252–1314), and Nichiji (b. 1250).⁹⁶

Despite the fragmentation in Hōnen's and Nichiren's movements, the tendency toward sectarian splintering did not emerge prominently in other Kamakura schools. Part of the reason was the nature and content of the founders' teachings. In the case of Shinran, there was little schism in his following, even though he himself was the founder of a separate sect within Hōnen's religious movement. In the case of Zen, its doctrines were not conducive to sectarian division. That is, they stressed the importance of Dharma lineage through which the enlightenment experience is kept alive in a continuous master–disciple transmission. In the case of Ippen, his teachings were not even formulated into doctrine at his death, and so there was no palpable issue from which one could dissent.

As stated previously, the Kamakura schools of Buddhism were distinctive in that they did not revolve so much around doctrinal studies as the earlier schools did but, rather, stressed experience and religious practice. Their religious organizations, therefore, were geared to provide a context for religious practice. What constituted religious practice was gradually broadened to include not only the exclusivistic practices, such as the *nembutsu*, which are the hallmark of Kamakura Buddhism, but also the practice of venerating the founders themselves. Examples of this new trend are found in the memorial services to the founders established in the Kamakura schools. The Chionkō ceremony to Hōnen and the Hōonkō ceremony to Shinran originated only decades after their death, but as time wore on they were elevated to become one of the most important rituals in their respective schools.⁹⁷

It also became popular to venerate iconic images of the founders and to build memorial halls (*meidō*) in the major temples to enshrine these images.⁹⁸ Religious leaders and organizers in the Kamakura schools contributed to the founders' deification by composing idealized biographies of them, which often were read aloud at memorial services for

⁹⁶ Takagi Yutaka, *Nichiren to sono montei* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1965), pp. 291–307.

⁹⁷ Each year the Chionkō service is held on the anniversary of Hōnen's death day, and the Hōonkō on the anniversary of Shinran's death day. The liturgy for such a service is called a *kōshiki*. *Kōshiki* were composed for a number of the Kamakura innovators. The one for Shinran, known as the *Hōonkōshiki*, in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho*, vol. 3 (Kyoto: Kōkyō shoin, 1941), pp. 655–60, was written by his great-grandson Kakunyo in 1294.

⁹⁸ The memorial hall to Shinran at the Honganji, the head temple of the Shinshū school, is larger than the hall in which the image of Amida Buddha is enshrined. Concerning the development of *meidō*, see Akamatsu Toshihide, *Kamakura Bukkyō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1957), pp. 337–55.

them. Some were expanded into illustrated editions (*emakimono*) to be used in teaching believers about the greatness of the founders.⁹⁹ For example, Hōnen's religious organization, which divided into branches early on, produced several different biographies of him. Over time, many of these biographies were embellished and enlarged so as to aggrandize the lives of the founders as much as possible.

In looking at these biographies and at the veneration of the founders in general, one can discern both the religious inclinations of ordinary believers and the institutional designs of sectarian organizers. Believers willingly and enthusiastically incorporated reverence for the founders into their religious outlook and practice. Indeed, organizers found this reverence to be a crucial element in establishing sectarian control. The deification of Shinran, for instance, helped strengthen the authority of his school's organizers, who were his blood descendants. They made their base of operations the Honganji temple, founded at Shinran's grave site, and they claimed the position of *hossu*, or chief priest of the temple, as the hereditary office of their family.¹⁰⁰ Many other organizers attached themselves to the memory of the founders through the use of religious writings, images, or other objects that they had received from them. These articles became potent symbols of authority, imparting a special privilege or status to their possessors.

Facilities where religious practices were performed were the institutional backbone of the Kamakura religious organizations. In the case of Shinran's school, these facilities were small religious meeting places called *dōjō*.¹⁰¹ The religious organization was gradually built in a pyramid fashion, with countless *dōjō* at its base. In other schools, temples were the first institutions around which religious organizations took shape.

Organizers sought to occupy key positions in the school by taking charge of the administration of major temples that had close connections with the founder. Struggles over administration and authority arose in the Nichiren school at the Kuonji temple on Mount Minobu where Nichiren had retired and in the Sōtō Zen school at the Eiheiiji monastery that Dōgen had founded.¹⁰² In Shinran's Shinshū school,

99 For examples of illustrated biographies of Kamakura Buddhist figures, see *Nihon emakimono zenshū*, vol. 10: *Ippen Hijiri e*; vol. 13: *Hōnen Shōnin eden*; vol. 20: *Zenshin Shōnin e, Boki e*; and vol. 23: *Yugyō Shōnin engi e* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1960–8).

100 Matsuno Junkō, "Honganji no seiritsu," in Akamatsu Toshihide and Kasahara Kazuo, eds., *Shinshūshi gaisetsu* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1963), pp. 83–94.

101 Kasahara, *Shinran to tōgoku nōmin*, pp. 271–5.

102 Imaeda Aishin, "Dōgen Sōhō Kanzan no monryū," and Fujii Manabu, "Tōgoku Hokke kyōdan no seiritsu to tenkai," in Akamatsu Toshihide, ed., *Nihon Bukkyōshi*, vol. 2 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1967), pp. 201–3, 245–6.

fierce competition emerged not over temple administration but over *dōjō*. Rival factions tried to incorporate as many *dōjō* congregations as possible into their respective religious organizations. After various ups and downs, the Honganji temple, established by Shinran's great-grandson Kakunyo (1270–1351), prevailed over the other factions and unified the school under its religious authority.¹⁰³ In the case of Ippen's Jishū school, it was difficult for a religious organization to emerge while he was still living because of the peripatetic life he led. His successor Shinkyō, while preserving religious itinerancy as a practice of the Jishū clergy, established a domicile base for proselytization, in the form of *dōjō* and temples. Once these institutions were in place, the school quickly gained definition.¹⁰⁴ In short, even the most loosely organized movements of Kamakura Buddhism developed a sectarian structure through fixed institutions where doctrine could be refined and symbols of authority housed.

The role of lay believers

Kamakura Buddhism began as a movement by turning away from traditional Buddhist doctrine and severing ties with established Buddhist temples. It took shape as a formal religious organization by consolidating believers around institutions of its own. With the exception of Zen in the early period, particularly the Sōtō Zen school of Dōgen, all the schools of Kamakura Buddhism actively proselytized among lay people. Hence, as the religious organizations gained greater structure, groups of believers had considerable say in the school's operation. The clerical organizers of the schools functioned primarily as leaders of ritual and religious practice, but the people who oversaw the organization's economic affairs were often lay adherents. Through their combined efforts the Kamakura schools gained a high degree of institutional stability, though the power and vitality of their teachings were sometimes diluted by institutional concerns.

The Shinshū school in its early decades is a striking example of the prominent role that the laity could play in sectarian affairs. Shinran taught that all people are equal in the sight of Amida Buddha. He was critical of the clerical ideal that existed in the established Buddhist schools, and he described himself as neither priest nor layman.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Concerning Kakunyo's life, see Shigematsu Akihisa, *Kakunyo* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1964). ¹⁰⁴ Ōhashi, *Jishū no seiritsu to tenkai*, pp. 79–99.

¹⁰⁵ *Kyōgyōshinhō*, in *Shinran, NST*, vol. 11, p. 258; and *Tannishō*, in *Shinran-shū Nichiren-shū, NKBT*, vol. 82, p. 196.

Because of this outlook, the Shinshū religious organization, during its formative period at least, consisted of nothing more than individual congregations. In congregational *dōjō* there was no great difference between *dōjō* leaders and ordinary believers, in either intellectual capacity or economic means. But this idyllic period of Shinran's school did not last long, for a master–disciple relationship gradually evolved between the *dōjō* head and the average adherent. The *dōjō* leader was at first merely a representative chosen from the ranks of congregational members. But as he became more specialized in his religious functions, the intellectual and economic gap between him and the other members widened.¹⁰⁶ The expansion of the *dōjō* leader's power gradually accorded him a superior status, and ultimately it fit well into the hierarchical sectarian pyramid that developed under the Honganji.¹⁰⁷ Among the various Kamakura schools, congregations of this type were most prominent in the Shinshū. Their egalitarian character derived not simply from Shinran's teachings but also from the fact that there was a greater social homogeneity of believers in Shinshū congregations than in other schools.

In other Kamakura schools, temples commonly functioned as the rallying point for the formation of religious organizations. Therefore, the people who were most involved in the construction of the temple usually emerged as the dominant figures among the laity. In Hōnen's Jōdoshū school and Eisai's Rinzaï Zen school, for example, aristocrats and powerful samurai became major donors and supporters, and so they exerted considerable influence on the organization's affairs.¹⁰⁸ The role of the religious organizers was limited more or less to the religious functions of the school. There gradually emerged a gap between the influence of these supporters and that of ordinary believers, who comprised the wider membership of the schools. Ordinary adherents had little say in the organization's administration, and so whatever activities they initiated had minimal impact.

Powerful supporters also began to place members of their own families in positions of influence as religious leaders and organizers in the temples. As a result, the power of other groups of believers within the school was circumscribed even more. The tendency in these religious

106 Ōsumi Kazuo, "Kamakura Bukkyō to sono kakushin undō," in *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi*, vol. 5, p. 245.

107 For an overview of the development of the Shinshū school in this context, see Akamatsu, and Kasahara, eds., *Shinshūshi gaisetsu*; and Kasahara, *Shinran to tōgoku nōmin*.

108 The Tōfukuji in Kyoto is an example of a temple in which aristocratic adherents became influential. The Jufukuji and the Engakuji in Kamakura are examples in which samurai became influential.

organizations was to revert to the pattern of the traditional schools of Buddhism wherein a small elite controlled the religious organization. The Nichiren school varied somewhat from this pattern. Its major supporters were mostly samurai, but there was not as pronounced a difference between them and the other believers. Thus, a broad spectrum of adherents was involved in the school's religious activities. Because of the greater number of parties initiating action and exerting influence, the religious organization was pulled in several different directions at the same time. These internal dynamics may have contributed to the sectarian schisms that plagued the Nichiren school more than the other Kamakura schools.¹⁰⁹

There has been considerable research on the specific classes in society that became the social foundations of the various schools of Kamakura Buddhism. Investigation into the organization of the schools and the circumstances of the believers who were attracted to them has been extensive in the postwar period. Although a number of controversies still remain, the prevailing views concerning the social origins of the Kamakura schools are as follows: Hōnen's teachings made their greatest inroads among aristocrats and commoners living in the increasingly complex urban environment of Kyoto and its vicinity.¹¹⁰ Shinran's teachings were disseminated primarily among the farming peasants of the Kantō countryside.¹¹¹ The Nichiren school received its principal support from the samurai residing along the coastal belt of the eastern provinces.¹¹² Eisai's Rinzai school of Zen appealed to urban aristocrats and upper-class samurai, whereas Dōgen's Sōtō school spread among the samurai of the outlying regions.¹¹³ These are the dominant theories concerning the social composition of the Kamakura schools, but debate continues over many of their finer points.¹¹⁴

CONCLUSION

The period from the middle of the twelfth century through the middle of the thirteenth was a pivotal juncture in the history of Japanese

109 Nakao Takashi, *Nichirenshū no seiritsu to tenkai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1973), pp. 28–84.

110 Inoue Mitsusada, *Nihon Jōdokyō seiritsushi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1956), pp. 283–333; and Tamura, *Nihon Bukkyō shisōshi kenkyū*, pp. 58–123.

111 Kasahara, *Shinran to tōgoku nōmin*, pp. 277–303.

112 Kawazoe Shōji, "Nichiren no shūkyō no seiritsu oyobi seikaku," in *Nihon meisō ronshū*, vol. 9: *Nichiren* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1982), pp. 2–28.

113 Imaeda Aishin, *Zenshū no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1966), pp. 13–213.

114 For alternative views and variations on these points, see Ienaga, *Chūsei Bukkyō shisōshi kenkyū*, pp. 2–109; and Akamatsu, *Kamakura Bukkyō no kenkyū*, pp. 60–72.

Buddhism. A number of priests broke ties with Mount Hiei, the citadel of established Buddhism, and became critical of the Buddhism espoused there. They believed that the religious ideal propounded in the traditional schools made it impossible for people to be saved in the present age, and they spawned a movement that sought to address the human condition in its actual state. This movement concentrated on the weakness of humans in their current situation, and it generated a new religious path containing a heavy component of faith. The leaders of this religious revolution steadfastly maintained that no person is excluded from enlightenment, and so they focused on how the Buddha can save even those overwhelmed by wrongdoings and defilements. In the process they produced forms of religious thought oriented toward the internal experience of human beings.

This new movement of thought, though creative in its own right, was built on ideas inherited from the literati of the Heian period, as well as on doctrinal principles produced at Mount Hiei. The context for its appearance was the profound social, political, and economic changes of the late Heian and Kamakura periods – that is, the decline of the aristocracy, the expansion of samurai control, the emergence of a new urban class of townsmen, and the transition from *shōen* to autonomous villages in the countryside. Kamakura Buddhism turned its back on the authority of earlier Buddhism; it exerted a strong influence on samurai society, which itself strove to create a new culture; and it spread its teachings aggressively among the common people.

Kamakura Buddhism generally refers to those schools with roots in the Kamakura period. They have had a pervasive influence on the religious thought and sentiment of the Japanese people even into modern times. The significance of Kamakura Buddhism in Japanese history is that for the first time Buddhism, which entered Japan as a foreign religion, was fully adapted to Japanese concerns and put down roots among the common people. Buddhist thought, transmitted with great difficulty from India, was boiled down to a few essentials. It was rendered into simple and comprehensible teachings and couched in the context of religious practices that ordinary people could perform. Admittedly, the Japanese adaptation of Buddhism made it diverge in several ways from its original form. From the beginning the Japanese fused Buddhism with Shinto and with their own long-held cosmology of the spirit world. In the Kamakura schools themselves the veneration of religious teachers and sectarian founders also distinguished Japanese Buddhism from its antecedents in other parts of Asia. Nonetheless, the streamlined and simplified

tenets produced by the Kamakura originators had a distinctly Buddhist message at their core.

The emphasis on belief and practice found in Kamakura Buddhism displaced a luxurious aesthetic sensibility that had been a part of Buddhism in the Heian period. Buddhism in the Kamakura period did not produce artistic works in the fields of painting, sculpture, architecture, or even literature. The only exceptions to this rule were the artistic images of the schools' founders used in the memorial services and the illustrated biographies of them used in religious teaching. The Rinzai Zen school, which had close ties to the bakufu, was later influential in the creation of Japan's literature, art, and culture of daily life, but such involvements of Rinzai did not exist in the Kamakura period. They emerged only in the Muromachi period that followed.

Notwithstanding Kamakura Buddhism's divergence from the fine arts, its impact on other spheres of society and culture was extensive. Its teachings stimulated Japan's most widespread propagation of Buddhism among the lower classes and fostered for the first time organizations that could rightly be called religious institutions of the people. It also challenged the earlier schools of Buddhism so profoundly that they were inspired to initiate various religious activities of their own. These consequences and others, as they worked their way through all levels of society, carved out an indisputable place for Kamakura Buddhism in Japanese history.