Building a Platform for Academic Buddhist Studies: Murakami Senshō

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I. Introduction: The "Experiment" of Hara Tanzan

THE Meiji period was one of upheaval in the realm of thought in general and brought decisive changes to educational institutions and research organizations of the day. One important development was, of course, the establishment of critically-inclined private universities such as Keio and Waseda, but we should also note the emergence of the newly-formed national (imperial) institutions—especially Tokyo University—which would bear the brunt of the new epoch's ideals of education and research. With respect to Buddhist studies, the situation was much the same as with other fields. In what follows, by way of an examination of the work of Murakami Senshō 村上専精 (1851–1929), the figure most responsible for laying the foundations of academic Buddhist studies in Japan, I shall also summarize many issues that even today continue to frame modern research in Buddhism. Let me begin with a brief look at the academic situation immediately preceding Murakami.

The person in charge of lectures on Buddhist scriptures in 1879, the time of the establishment of Buddhist studies at Tokyo University (afterwards

* This article is a translation of a piece that appeared in Sueki Fumiko's 末木文美士, *Meiji shisōkaron: Kindai Nihon no shisō saikō I* 明治思想家論: 近代日本の思想・再考 I (Essays on Meiji Intellectuals: A Reconsideration of Modern Japanese Thought, Volume I), Chapter 4, pp. 86–109.

Tokyo Imperial University), was Hara Tanzan 原坦山 (1819–92).[1] From 1881, when this lectureship was renamed Indian Philosophy, it was held jointly between Hara and Yoshitani Kakuju 吉谷覚寿. During this period, the chair alternated between these two scholars on a biannual basis until it was taken over by Murakami in 1890. This period was the true beginning of academic Buddhist studies.

Among Buddhist scholars of the late Tokugawa and early Meiji eras, the two most notable are Fukuda Gyōkai 福田行誡 (1806–88), famous for his strict adherence to the precepts, and Sada Kaiseki 佐田介石 (1818–82), an advocate of the so-called *Shumisen* 須弥山 or "Mount Sumeru" doctrine, which opposed Buddhism to Western science. As opposed to the conservative revival espoused by these two scholars, Hara took a proactive approach to Western learning. In particular, he adopted scientific positivism in order to develop a Buddhist theory of consciousness upon a rational, medical foundation. Indeed, his standpoint was what could be called a part of the "Enlightenment School," whose watchword was nothing less than "experiment."

According to Hara, then, how is Buddhism characterized in relation to Western science? "In terms of the mastery of external objects, it is not possible to reach the level of physical science. However, when it comes to providing practical mental training, there is nothing equal to Buddhism."[2] Connected to the study of medicine, this "practical mental training" is explained by Hara as being grounded in "experiment" through his explication of two theories: one of "cerebro-spinal transformation" (*nōseki itairon* 脳脊異体論) and another regarding the "equiprimordiality of delusion and illness" (*wakubyō dōgenron* 惑病同原論). The argument is developed within his *Jitokushō* 時得抄, published in 1869, beginning with the "cerebro-spinal transformation theory." Here, as against Western medical opinion, wherein the brain and spinal cord are of the same substance, Hara argues that from a Buddhist standpoint the two are in fact of contrary nature. In looking at the terms in his *Shinshikiron* 心識論 (Mind and Consciousness Theory), it is fairly clear that Hara's theory is derived from the system of *Ta-ch'eng chi'i-hsin lun* 大乗起信論

[1] Hara hailed from the samurai village of Iwaki 磐城, Fukushima prefecture. At Shōheikō 昌平黌 in Tokyo (Edo), a school founded by the *bakufu* at Yushima 湯島 (presently Bunkyō-ku 文京区), he studied the Confucian classics and, upon completion of medical training, began to lecture at Sendan Academy, affiliated with the Sōtō Zen temple Komagome Kisshōji 駒込吉祥寺. Around this time, upon the recommendation of the academy president, he was ordained.

[2] Hara 1909, p. 19.

(Awakening of the Mahāyāna Faith), in which the roots of illness are conceived as a matter of course within the obstructions of ignorance (Skt. *avidyā*; Jp. 無明 *mumyō*) and desire or affliction (Skt. *kleśa*; Jp. 煩悩 *bonnō*). This is also asserted in Hara's "theory of equiprimordiality of delusion and illness." His assertion is that the roots of illness lie within ignorance and desire. Moreover, the Buddhistic explanations of them also provide practical advice on how to overcome both ignorance and desire and thus provide a cure for illness. Fine, but where does the "experimental" method come into play?

Hara lays his experimental proof on the power of meditation to eliminate ignorance and desire. According to his notes, "the power of meditation (*jōriki* 定力) is a name for the method of eradicating the delusional hindrances in the Buddhist teachings"[3]—this is the power of perfect absorption (Skt. *samādhi*; Jp. *sanmai* 三昧) or meditation (Skt. *dhyāna*; Jp. *zenjō* 禅定). However, can we call such an "experiment" in the way the term is used in medical science? In the academic climate of Hara's time, to what extent was this kind of "experiment" accepted as such? This is a question I am unable to make clear. However, we are left with the fact that, on the basis of this very concept of "experiment," Hara was accepted as a lecturer at Tokyo Imperial University, and then as a member of the Imperial Academy.

From today's perspective, we can appraise Hara's medical theory as an attempt to revalidate Eastern medicine in opposition to Western medical theory. However, this standpoint of placing the "experiment" of the "power of meditation" on a par with scientific experiment proved unsustainable. The influence of Hara's experimental theory can be seen rather as a passing phenomenon within this transitional period.

Under the new lectureship of Murakami, Buddhist studies at Tokyo Imperial University would reach a new level, involving a type of historical research focused on a method of scholarly analysis of historical records. As such, Buddhist studies would no longer be tied to experiments in natural science, but would advance in the direction of uncovering historical evidence in the way of the humanities and social sciences. In what follows, the specific characteristics and issues of Murakami's Buddhist studies will be considered in some detail.

[3] Ibid., p. 100.

II. The Foundations of Historical Research

Murakami Becomes a Professor at Tokyo Imperial University

A detailed account of the life and work of Murakami can be found in the "Autobiography" section towards the end of the fifth volume, *Jissenron* 実践論 (On Practice), of *Bukkyō tōitsuron* 仏教統一論 (On the Unification of Buddhism), which was published in 1927. Here Murakami reminisces on his entire life, dividing it into six periods. Born in Tanba 丹波 (now part of Hyōgo prefecture) within a temple[4] of the Ōtani branch of the Shin school, Murakami passed his childhood years there until the age of 18, when he traveled first to Harima 播磨 (also in Hyōgo prefecture), and afterwards to Echigo 越後 (present-day Niigata prefecture), Kyoto and Mikawa 三河 (present-day Aichi prefecture) for study. In 1880, he returned to Kyoto, where he entered the Honganji Normal School and pursued research and training for another seven years, before moving to Tokyo in 1887 to take a position as lecturer at Sōtōshū University 曹洞宗大学. In 1896, at the age of 45, Murakami began his involvement in the movement to reform the Higashi Honganji (Ōtani) denomination. In 1901, blamed for his contributions to the controversial *Daijō hibussetsu* theory 大乗非仏説論,[5] he was forced to withdraw from the priesthood. In 1911, at the age of 60, Murakami was reinstated, and spent his remaining years in training and education.

For various intervals beginning in 1890, Murakami lectured in Indian philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University. In 1917, thanks to a donation from Yasuda Zenjirō 安田善次郎, he became the first holder of the chair in Indian Philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University, a position he was to hold until his retirement six years later. Because of Murakami, Buddhist studies as a proper academic practice at that university was established.

It bears noting that, at Tokyo Imperial University, in 1901, Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 (1866–1945), having returned from overseas, took on the chair of Sanskrit. In similar fashion, Murakami's peer Nanjō Bun'yū 南条文雄 (1849–1927), another Buddhist scholar who had traveled to Western

[4] Kyōkakuji 教覚寺.

[5] Literally, "Mahāyāna is (or Mahāyāna scriptures are) not the Buddha's teaching" theory. Simply put, this movement attempted to make the case that the Mahāyāna sutras were not preached by the historical Buddha. For ease of grammatical usage, the translator has decided to leave this term in its Japanese form.

Europe to immerse himself in the study of Sanskrit Buddhist texts, had brought the fruits of his investigations back to Japan.

It was not, however, Nanjō, nor the well-known scholar Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919) who was entrusted with the chair in Indian Philosophy, but Murakami, which shows what was being sought in "Imperial" Buddhist studies. That is that traditional doctrinal studies were to be given a modernist reinterpretation. Referring personally to his work as "beggar's scholarship,"[6] he had not received the benefits of the new forms of education being developed. Completely lacking in pretence, Murakami built his reputation from the midst of his personal struggles—it was not something borrowed, we might say, but rather something truly earned.

Incidentally, having returned from Germany to assume a professorship in the philosophy department, Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1855–1944) was in charge of lectures in Comparative Religion and Eastern Philosophy from 1891 to 1898. However, in practical terms, the topics covered fell within the sphere of Indian philosophy. Until 1894, the focus was on pre-Buddhist philosophy, and thereafter on the origins of Buddhism. In 1898, under the direction of Anesaki Masaharu 姉崎正治 (1873–1949), these lectures became Introductory Religious Studies. Anesaki had also studied abroad—in Germany—and had done much to further research on early Buddhism. However, Murakami's course in Indian philosophy had little connection with these currents. Whereas the courses in religious studies, in attempting to avoid being one-sided, aspired to do comparative research in various religions, those within Indian philosophy maintained a close association with traditional Buddhist organizations and institutions. These courses were characterized by the inheritance of trends in traditional doctrinal studies, while at the same time moving towards modernization.

The Launching of Bukkyō Shirin

Murakami's first major contribution to the academic study of Buddhism was the launching of *Bukkyō shirin* 仏教史林, a journal dedicated to historical research, and marking the first time that the term "modern scholarship" could be appropriately applied to Buddhist studies in Japan.

Bukkyō shirin first saw the light of day on the Buddha's birthday, April 8, 1894. The opening page of the premiere issue is adorned with the following

[6] Murakami 1927, part 2, p. 127.

remarks of Murakami: "Through stating the necessity for Buddhist historical research, we shall clarify both the reasons for publication and the goals of this journal." Thus, in a spirit brimming with enthusiasm and confidence, the foundation of a new type of scholarship was proclaimed. "For those of us, here in Japan, born two thousand, nine-hundred and twenty-two years after the birth of Śākyamuni, there has been an immeasurable tradition which makes us able to experience his teachings."[7] Here, research in Buddhist history consists precisely of this effort to become acquainted with the interval from Śākyamuni to the present. Suchwise, historical research in Buddhism is not merely a science.

> As for the nature of Buddhism . . . on one hand it is necessary to approach it with theoretical and empirical tools. Yet, on the other hand, practice from a position of faith and worship is also necessary . . . Therefore this journal will pass beyond the ordinary bonds of the independent fields of science and religion, in order to include components of both.[8]

There is no single, agreed-upon theory in Buddhist historical research, a fact made quite clear in a piece entitled "Gosō ga bukkyō no rekishi o kenkyū suru shisō: Daiichi" 吾曹が仏教の歴史を研究する思想: 第一 (Our Thoughts on Buddhist Historical Studies, Part I).[9] Here, it is suggested that "Contemporary Japanese historians can be divided into two large factions, one scientific, the other moralistic; or possibly, one pursuing historical investigation, the other transmitting a message."[10] The authors of *Bukkyō shirin* wish, in the end, to follow neither. "We are attempting Buddhist historical research from our own "Buddhistic" perspective (*bukkyō-shugi* 仏教主義). In other words, we are trying to see Buddhist history by means of Buddhist powers of discernment."[11] Here, we see a particular characteristic of *Bukkyō shirin*'s, or, better yet, Murakami's own historical perspective on Buddhism.

This cannot be said to be simply a question of finding "proofs" in history. There is a clear distinction here from the work of regular academic historians. The biographies of ancient people are filled with omens and miracles,

[7] Murakami 1894a, p. 3.
[8] Ibid., p. 5.
[9] Murakami 1894d.
[10] Ibid., p. 1.
[11] Ibid., p. 2.

which are dismissed by such historians as little more than delusions. However, "as scholars who hold to Buddhist powers of discrimination, we are unable to simply deny wonders and miracles."[12] On this point, later scholars such as Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之助, taking a more purely historical standpoint, would disagree with Buddhist historical studies as framed by Murakami.

Another important feature of Murakami's perspective on Buddhism is expressed in the lead article of the third issue, "Gosō ga bukkyō no rekishi o kenkyū suru shisō: Daini," which concerns the method of handling religious or doctrinal history. There are two ways to approach doctrinal history. "The first is to restrict oneself to the specific doctrines of one school or one branch of a religion . . . The other method is to begin with an outlook on the mutual development of the various schools and branches, that is to say, the history of general or ordinary doctrine."[13]

With respect to the former way, "By means of religious thought, as much as possible the truth of that particular school or branch is extolled in a form of apologetics, while critical thought should not be accepted at all."[14] As for the latter approach, "Rather than religious thought, the weight of critical thought is brought to bear on the matters at hand."[15] Although the former method can be seen in his *Shinshū zenshi* 真宗全史 (History of the Shin School) from 1916, Murakami's primary focus was on the latter and was brought to fruition in his *Bukkyō tōitsuron*. In this case, "Experts of each school will certainly raise their voices in criticism, yet we will thoroughly protect our way of thought, as the latter research requires an attempt at unselfish and impartial critical analysis."[16] And indeed, following this very prediction, *Bukkyō tōitsuron*, by virtue of its reliance on ideas connected with *Daijō hibussetsuron*, would come into direct collision with the Shin Buddhist institution.

In the above, Murakami clearly expresses his own methodology with respect to the study of Buddhist history. That is to say, first, he argues that it must have the capacity to withstand criticism according to the academic standards of the day. Second, however, it cannot be simply "scientific," it must also be coincident with the religious standpoint—or, to put it another way, the "Buddhistic" perspective. Third, while analyzing the unique features

[12] Murakami 1894a, p. 3.
[13] Murakami 1894f, p. 4.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., p. 5.
[16] Ibid.

of each school and branch, study of the more general, shared doctrines is also to be emphasized. Here, the question becomes to what extent was Murakami's research actually affected by the second and third points of view. We must now turn to examine the tangible fruits of his research.

Main Points of Murakami's Historical Studies

Each issue of *Bukkyō shirin* was divided into seven parts: Historical Criticism, Historical Investigations, Geography, Doctrinal History, Biography, Miscellaneous, and Bulletin. The articles in the premiere issue appear as follows:

Historical Criticism
  Murakami: "Through Stating the Necessity for Buddhist Historical Research, a Clarification of Both the Reasons for Publication and the Goals of This Journal."
  Washio Junkyō 鷲尾順敬: "Discussion of the Conflict and Harmonization of Buddhism and Taoism in China"
Historical Investigations
  Murakami: "Thoughts on the Period of Śākyamuni's Birth and Death"
Geography
  Nanjō Bun'yū: "Geography of Ancient India"
Doctrinal History
  Murakami: "History of Shin Doctrine"
Biography
  Murakami: "Life of Prince Shōtoku"
Miscellaneous
  Washio: "In Memory of Virtuous Masters"
  Washio (revised by Murakami): "An Index to Chinese Translations of the *Tripiṭaka*"
Bulletin

As we can see, with the exception of Nanjō's, who was invited by Murakami to provide a guest article, all of the pieces were penned by Murakami or Washio. Moreover, having been trained in the same school and branch, Washio's assistance only contributed to the journal taking on the appearance of Murakami's own private magazine. Since the greater part of the articles in *Bukkyō shirin* were serialized, Issue Two is essentially a continuation of the inaugural publication. The third issue contains a fresh article by Murakami entitled "Bukkyō kakushū hattatsushi" 仏教各宗発達史 (History

of Buddhist Sectarian Development).[17] Here, we see the implementation of his research in unified doctrinal history, which would later provide the foundation for *Bukkyō tōitsuron*.

In the subsequent period, Murakami received assistance from Sakaino Satoshi 境野哲 (Kōyō 黄洋), marginally increasing the number of contributors to the journal. In any event, in the furious way in which Murakami wrote the monthly installments we can get a sense of the tremendous zeal with which he immersed himself completely in the production of this journal.

Regarding the articles to be published, Murakami insisted on molding them as he saw fit. For example, in "Shakamuni butsu shuttan nyūmetsu no nendai kō" 釈迦牟尼仏出誕入滅ノ年代考 (Thoughts on the Period of Śākyamuni's Birth and Death),[18] he takes on the momentous task of establishing the number of years that had passed since the time of the Buddha, and in the second part of the article, settles the matter based largely on an extensive perusal of Chinese materials regarding the era of the birth of the Buddha. This work provided a spur to the elucidation of the "historical Buddha" to be found in the later *Daijō hibussetsuron* writings. Murakami could not read Sanskrit; moreover, he had little knowledge of Western scholarship. Yet, his wide grasp of Chinese Buddhist texts in this field of research remains unparalleled and his conclusions even today are largely valid. However, the logic leading to these is rather curious.

> We are not concerned with the explanations of foreigners, nor with the path of evidence followed by Western scholars . . . Buddha was born during the reign of the Chou Dynasty Emperor Chao, and according to tradition, entering into final Nirvāṇa during the time of the Emperor Mu . . .[19]

Despite a thorough comprehension of the materials, in summing up his investigations Murakami effectively leap-frogged over several problems. It is hardly a demonstration that will convince many people, and in fact we must call this the limitation of Murakami's "Buddhistic" way. In similar fashion, unsurprisingly, these constraints can also be seen in "Shōtoku kōtaishi den"

[17] Murakami 1896.

[18] Murakami 1894b.

[19] Murakami 1894e, p. 15. According to Chinese sources, Śākyamuni Buddha was born in the 26th year of the reign of Emperor Chao 周昭王時代 (r. 1052–1002 BCE), and died during the reign of Emperor Mu 周穆王時代 (r. 1001–947 BCE).

聖徳皇太子伝 (Life of Prince Shōtoku),[20] as serialized in the first two issues of *Bukkyō shirin*. In this piece, in accordance with Murakami's opinions, the life of Shōtoku is presented replete with folklore and legend, rather than from a strictly historical standpoint. Indeed, the spiritual standpoint takes over entirely, completely overwhelming all else.

We can easily attribute this limitation of Murakami's to the transitional nature of the period. One reason is that Murakami was not well informed as to the direction of Buddhist and Indian studies in Western Europe, and, in addition, due to his inadequacy in Sanskrit, was unable to utilize the primary Indian sources. After Murakami, under the direction of Kimura Taiken 木村泰賢 (1881–1930), who had studied in Europe, the Indian Philosophy department of Tokyo Imperial University would clarify the direction of the elucidation of Buddhism, making Indian philosophy the starting-point in both name and fact. In 1930, upon Kimura's sudden death and the succession of Ui Hakuju 宇井伯寿 (1882–1963), Buddhist studies in Japan would focus even more on Indian materials as the core of research, bringing it to the fore of the discipline worldwide. And yet, the foundation that maintained such cutting-edge research continued to be the traditional Buddhist organizations. This inconsistency, embedded in the multilayered character of Buddhist studies in Japan, is one that even today has yet to be fully resolved.

In any event, even while personally acknowledging his own weakness with respect to Western scholarship and Indian materials, Murakami's later research was limited to Japanese Buddhism in works such as *Dai nihon bukkyō shi* 大日本仏教史 (History of Japanese Buddhism), authored with Washio and Sakaino in 1897 and *Nihon bukkyō shikō* 日本仏教史綱 (Threads of Japanese Buddhism, 1898–99), that the first true histories of Japanese Buddhism—or, one might say, introductions to such—would be successfully realized. Rather than linking Indian philosophy with Buddhist studies, the main role of *Bukkyō shirin*, then, was the reclamation of Buddhist history within the history of Japan. In the first place, the main reason behind the aspirations of Murakami's historical Buddhist studies, as he made known in a conversation with historian Mikami Sanji 三上参次 (1865–1939), was that among all Japanese historical records, "more than two-thirds are records of Buddhist history."[21]

[20] Murakami 1894c.

[21] Murakami 1927, part 2, p. 135.

Having said that, Murakami's biggest problem was not his inability to deal with the primary Indian sources, but rather can be found in the value system of his "Buddhistic" approach. Once again, we might say that this is due to the transitional nature of the period that could not completely accept positivism. However, it is not simply due to this state of transition. In the first place, historical research is never a matter of simply gathering proof. There is always some sort of value judgment, which may be called "historical perspective." While Murakami's argument may appear radically new, in fact his basic value system does not escape the confines of established Buddhism, and remains essentially protective of it. It holds no power to shock the system, as it were. That is to say, because of his uncritical position regarding the value of the principles of Buddhism, Murakami's positivism remains simply superficial. This is where his "limit" comes into view. We will see the relevance of this matter within the following discussion of *Daijō hibussetsuron*, which poses a crucial question but ultimately ends in compromise with the value system of the existing Buddhist organizations.

In the controversy awoken by Inoue Tetsujirō regarding "Kyōiku to shūkyō no shōtotsu" 教育と宗教の衝突 (The Clash between Religion and Education), Murakami took a position on the side of Inoue in his own *Bukkyō chūkōron* 仏教忠孝論 (Loyalty and Filial Piety in Buddhism, 1893). We can see his personal position on patriotism and apologetics by looking at the essay on the first page of the first issue of *Bukkyō shirin*, where such is expressed in the following forthright manner.

> Because Buddhist history is closely related to the history of the Japanese nation, we are guided by a spirit of respect and loyalty towards the nation. Also Buddhist history is a part of our own personal lives and histories, which induces a dutiful spirit when we consider our ancestors.[22]

While avoiding the tendency towards "one sect, one branch," he aimed at prosperity for the entire Buddhist world, and this was adjusted to fit the needs of the state. This motivation continued to support the summit of academic Buddhist studies at Tokyo Imperial University long after Murakami had left his position.

[22] Murakami 1894a, p. 10.

III. The Transformation of *Daijō Hibussetsuron*

Setbacks to Bukkyō tōitsuron

In the following period, Murakami's interest turned towards matters of doctrine, and to the challenge of writing his masterwork—*Bukkyō tōitsuron*. As already suggested in the pages of *Bukkyō shirin*, the grand practical design of such was, by way of a comprehensive doctrinal history, to bring to realization a "scheme for the amalgamation of all Buddhist schools."[23] Its composition was to be arranged in five parts: one, *Daikōron* 大綱論 (Outline); two, *Genriron* 原理論 (On Principles); three, *Buddaron* 仏陀論 (On the Buddha); four, *Kyōkeiron* 教系論 (On Lineage); and five, *Jissenron* (On Practice).

In reality, however, *Daikōron* (1901), *Genriron* (1903), and *Buddaron* (1905) appeared separately, with two-year interruptions, while *Jissenron* was not completed until much later, during the early Shōwa era (1927), when the work was published in two parts. Murakami states that *Shinshū zenshi* 真宗全史 (1916) is the completion of his *Kyōkeiron*, which was never published.[24]

The period from the publication of the *Daikōron* to that of *Buddaron*—between the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars—was the time in which, through the activity of scholars such as Kiyozawa Manshi 清沢満之 (1863–1903) and Takayama Chogyū 高山樗牛 (1871–1902), Buddhist thought was brought into the modern period. Within scholarship, more generally, this was a time of great transformation. While Murakami's work itself does not fall entirely within the framework of academic study, it was significant as a response to the conditions of this period.

The modification of the grand aims of *Bukkyō tōitsuron* became inevitable due to both changed personal circumstances and what Murakami refers to as the "wholesale transformation of social thought."[25] "At the time of its first publication, theoretically and also practically, there was a possibility of Buddhist unity, as well as the thought that such was necessary."[26] However, after this time, he could not help but acknowledge that while "the theoretical possibility remained, the practical possibility did not."[27] To speak conversely,

[23] Murakami 1901, p. 10.
[24] Murakami 1927, part 1, p. 4.
[25] Ibid., p. 3.
[26] Ibid., pp. 4–5.
[27] Ibid., p. 5.

it was only at the time of the publication of the first three parts of *Bukkyō tōitsuron*, i.e., in the latter part of the Meiji period, that it was possible to think of "the amalgamation of all Buddhist schools" as a conceivable task. We are able to perceive from this the atmosphere of energy and vitality within the Buddhist world of this period. However, before long the enthusiasm would dry up, and eventually grand topics on the scale of complete unification of Buddhism would be abandoned.

The Impact of Daijō Hibussetsuron

Although there are parts of *Bukkyō tōitsuron* that appear valid by today's standards, an extensive treatment of the work as a whole is hardly productive. However, here we should consider the central issues in Murakami's discourse on *Daijō hibussetsuron*, which are begun in *Daikōron* and led him into a veritable storm in the Buddhist world.

Daijō hibussetsuron is discussed in the third chapter of the secondary discourse in *Daikōron*, entitled "Daijō bussetsu ni kan suru hiken" 大乗仏説に関する鄙見 (My Humble Opinion on the Mahāyāna Scriptures). Feeling the displeasure of the Ōtani branch authorities, however, Murakami was compelled to withdraw from the priesthood. According to his autobiography, this theory was only a secondary reason for this move. It had its origins in his discord with Ishikawa Shundai 石川舜台 (1842–1931), who maintained tight control over the Ōtani branch at the time of the reform movement.[28] In any event, *Daijō hibussetsuron* would become a scandalous incident within the Buddhist world of the day, with various disputes developing on all sides. Upon publication of the piece, *Daijō bussetsuron hihan* 大乗仏説論批判 (A Critique of the Argument That the Mahāyāna Teachings are by the Buddha) in 1903, Murakami undertook an even closer investigation of this problem.

After the body of *Daikōron*, there is a secondary discourse consisting of the following five chapters:

1. Thoughts on Śākyamuni Buddha
2. Thoughts on the *Trikāya* (Three Bodies of the Buddha)
3. Thoughts on the Mahāyāna Teachings
4. Thoughts on the Establishment of Faith
5. Thoughts on Sectarian Congruence

In each of these chapters, the author provides his views on various problems

[28] Murakami 1927, part 2, p. 169.

with frankness and candor. It is in the third chapter that the question of whether the Mahāyāna teachings are "not by the Buddha" is discussed in some detail. However, the issue is touched on throughout the entire work, from beginning to end.

In Chapter One, Murakami deals with the question of what can be gleaned from Śākyamuni Buddha—more specifically, the problem of "whether or not Śākyamuni was a human being."[29] Generally, there is an understanding that "while Śākyamuni was essentially more than human, he appeared in the guise of a human being."[30] In response to this, Murakami argues that, "we cannot in any way possess knowledge of this fact, for, viewing with our common sense, we see only the external form of the matter."[31] Thus, to the last, from the standpoint of common sense, Śākyamuni appears as a human. Yet it is because he was "a superior person, one without peers among human beings, a great sage of the world, that we may, without hesitation, refer to him as the Buddha."[32]

In the second chapter, Murakami deals with the question of why the complicated theory of the bodies of the Buddha (*busshin ron* 仏身論) developed, by focusing in particular on the *Trikāya* or three-body doctrine (Jp. *sanjin setsu* 三身説). According to this teaching, the three bodies of the Buddha are: the "truth" or "Dharma-body" (Skt. *dharmakāya*; Jp. *hosshin* 法身; the conceptual Buddha), the "bliss" or "enjoyment-body" (Skt. *saṃbhogakāya*; Jp. *hōjin* 報身; Buddha body attained as a reward for practice), and the "salvation" or "emanation-body" (Skt. *nirmānakāya*; Jp. *ōjin* 応身; Buddha materialized in order to teach or rescue other beings). He considers the development of this three-body doctrine within Buddhism in two different ways. One, as "an idea developed in relation to Śākyamuni himself" (i.e., Buddha-body theory, or Buddha theory), and two, as "an idea developed in relation to Nirvāṇa, itself" (i.e., Nirvāṇa theory).[33] Here, with respect to why this doctrine arose, Murakami writes the following: "The Buddha-body theory, which, at first, was an interpretation of Śākyamuni as a man, gradually progressed to an idealistic form, while, the idealistic theory of Nirvāṇa gradually took on traces of personification."[34]

[29] Murakami 1901, p. 445.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., p. 448.
[33] Ibid., p. 452.
[34] Ibid.

In other words, while the characteristics of Śākyamuni faced a gradual process of idealization, expanding from the salvation-body to the bliss- and Dharma-bodies, the idealistic theory of Nirvāṇa developed in the opposite direction, going through a process of gradual personification from the Dharma-body through the bliss-body to the salvation-body. Yet, that sort of Buddha cannot be said to be an actual being. "We hold to the explanation that the Buddha was in fact the individual Śākyamuni. Other manifold Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are strictly abstract ideal forms, without concrete existence."[35]

This is a radical proposal. In such a case, what becomes, for example, of Amida Buddha? The answer is found in the third section of the text ("Survey"): "Dainichi, Amida, are simply pseudonyms for a principle."[36] "When we envision True Suchness within Amida Buddha, what we must see is in fact Amida Buddha within True Suchness."[37]

In this manner, from the standpoint of seeing the one Buddha, Śākyamuni, in his humanity, Murakami in the third chapter of the secondary discourse presents his argument concerning the Mahāyāna teachings. "I must conclude that the Mahāyāna teachings are not the words of the Buddha. However, I believe the Mahāyāna teachings as a development of Buddhism." This "development of Buddhism"[38] is in fact a Buddhism "that developed only after the death of Śākyamuni."[39]

There are two directions to this development, "one way is a development taken directly from an interpretation of the words of Śākyamuni, the other is a development based on deductive reasoning with respect to the truth of Śākyamuni's enlightenment."[40] That is to say, while the former path, adhering loyally to Śākyamuni's teachings, can be found within the Hīnayāna, the extreme position of the latter can be recognized in the "transmission outside the scriptures" of Zen, or Shingon and Pure Land Buddhism, which seek the truth outside of the words and teachings of Śākyamuni. In the middle, we might place the larger number of Mahāyāna streams."[41]

[35] Ibid., pp. 454–5.
[36] Ibid., p. 372.
[37] Ibid., p. 373.
[38] Ibid., p. 459.
[39] Ibid., p. 460.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., p. 462.

In such a way, within this work, and more particularly within *Buddaron*, does Murakami make an effort to expand his thesis in a clear and logical fashion. He also makes a link to *Daijō hibussetsuron*, a position that is further clarified in Chapter Four.

> As a rule, there are two main forms to what is referred to as religious faith. One, which does not require an appeal to common sense, is belief beyond or outside anything rational, while the other is faith obtained through approval of an appeal to reason or common sense. In these two types of faith, the first cannot help but disappear through the advance of society and progress, while only the second can accompany social progress. If we foolish scholars are unable to throw away our own common sense and develop a faith outside of reason, how could more lettered men possibly do so?[42]

For Murakami, religion, to the end, had to be something intelligible on the basis of reason and common sense. We can call this a kind of enlightenment rationalism. It is a perspective far more clear and radical than that of the "Buddhistic" section of *Bukkyō shirin*. "Mixing comparative with historical thought, and adding a critical component to comparative thought, with the necessary approval of common sense, we thus approach Buddhism."[43] History, comparison, and criticism became his primary methods. Yet, that would change slightly over time.

The Changes in his Daijō Hibussetsuron

Over two years after *Daikōron*, Murakami published *Daijō bussetsuron hihan*, again discussing some of his ideas about *Daijō hibussetsuron*. This work, which begins from the Indian sutras, and discusses the Edo-period controversy over origins fomented by Tominaga Nakamoto 富永仲基 (1715–46)[44] as well as the lingering disputes of his own day, provided a direction that resulted in an excellent body of research that has come down to us today.

[42] Ibid., p. 464.

[43] Ibid., p. 467–8.

[44] Tominaga was one of the first, if not the very first scholar to openly question Śākyamuni's authorship of the Mahāyāna sutras: "The scholars of later generations vainly say that all the teachings came directly from the golden mouth of the Buddha and were intimately transmitted by those who heard him frequently" (Tominaga 1990, pp. 4 and 81 ff.). Somewhat surprisingly, given his time and environment, Tominaga did this by utilizing critical, historical methods, entirely independently of the influence of Western scholarship.

However, here the problem is not the concrete details of the research but Murakami's personal argument on *Daijō hibussetsuron*. Yet, with respect to the main point, the departure from the clarity of *Daikōron* presents some difficulties. By making the opposition of "history" and "doctrine" the foundation of this work, Murakami was led to discuss the question of whether or not the Mahāyāna teachings are by the Buddha.

> With respect to the Mahāyāna teachings, from the side of doctrine we can see an unshakeable development or process of fusion. On the other hand, however, from the side of history, we cannot so readily call it such.[45]

In this work's presentation of the equivalence of doctrine and Mahāyāna teachings, as well as the reverse equivalence of history with the idea that the Mahāyāna teachings are not by the Buddha, by way of such a distinctive usage of doctrine and history, he leaves the opportunity for the recognition of their validity. While Murakami's earlier *Daikōron* displays a thorough adherence to *Daijō hibussetsuron* and only assesses Mahāyāna Buddhism as "developed Buddhism," the tone of the argument here is different. What is more, here his argument seems to suggest that the Mahāyāna teachings, as doctrine, outstripped in excellence the historical reality that they are not the Buddha's words.

> Through a doctrinal survey, we can see that, in fact, the Mahāyāna teachings of the true Buddha outrival those of the Hīnayāna, because the Hīnayāna teachings were preached by the "emanation-body" while the Mahāyāna were taught through the "Dharma-body."[46]
>
> As such, passionate faith does not have its origin at the end of the invariable dullness of history; passionate faith inevitably begins to emerge from above history. That is to say, passionate faith is invariably born from doctrine, and therefore, the way in which these problems with Mahāyāna Buddhism are resolved is absolutely unrelated to faith.[47]

[45] Murakami 1903 p. 5.
[46] Ibid., pp. 7–8.
[47] Ibid., p. 8.

One wonders what became of the passion for history of the period of *Bukkyō shirin*, now that history has become a matter of "dullness" and placed below doctrine. We should note, however, that *Daikōron* did not recognize the existence of concretely existent Buddhas other than Śākyamuni, and thus did not consider the teachings of the "true Buddha." Therefore, in this work, by forcing a humble historical dimension onto *Daijō hibussetsuron* to lessen its impact, a sort of compromise is devised. The conclusion of the book states the following: "Mahāyāna itself is, in short, something beyond common sense, and that which is above common sense is above the early scriptures."[48] Thus, he acknowledges that Mahāyāna is "beyond common sense." On this point, there is an obvious break from the stubborn insistence on the "common sense" viewpoint found in *Daikōron*.

Of course, I do not mean to suggest that the standpoint of simple and clear "common sense" found in *Daikōron* is necessarily superior. However, to some extent, in order to pass through the sometimes obstinate, closed world of Buddhism, one would expect a reliance on the soundness of worldly common sense as a foundation for a positive critique. Yet, by conveniently introducing a standpoint based on his own understanding of doctrine as being "above common sense," the "common sense" of the Buddhist world and that of society stand together in compromise, yet remain isolated from each other, effectively hiding the contradictions and conflicts that must be resolved.

This sort of change of course is related to a tendency within *Bukkyō ronsō*. In the third part, "Buddha," a theory of the Buddha is developed that is nearly identical to that contained in *Daijō bussetsuron hihan*. There, while maintaining a strict adherence to the notion of "one Buddha—Śākyamuni," he brings the argument in a completely different direction. "Scholars who rely solely on the tangible body of Śākyamuni, must not be suspicious of the abstract Great Buddha."[49] Here, in this acknowledgment of the "beyond human" aspect of Śākyamuni, we can see a repudiation of *Daikōron*.

> Our Śākyamuni is one who realized the truth. One who realizes the truth is one who fuses with the truth, one who fuses with the truth is one who breaks down the self, thus attaining complete convergence with the Absolute Truth.[50]

[48] Ibid., p. 212.
[49] Murakami 1905, p. 543.
[50] Ibid., p. 540.

> As such, primary enlightenment in the Mahāyāna teachings (*hongaku* 本覚) is none other than Śākyamuni Tathāgata, himself, who attained enlightenment at Buddhagaya, but anyone's conjecture will surely fall short of the actual case. However, if we follow the conclusions of the doctrine of non-duality (*shihon funi* 始本不二), this primary enlightenment is truly Śākyamuni Tathāgata, and that Śākyamuni Tathāgata is essentially no different from Dainichi Tathāgata or Amida Tathāgata.[51]

Thus we have an equation: primary enlightenment = Śākyamuni = Dainichi = Amida, one that passes beyond the standard Buddhist view. Surely, due to this, there is a possibility for a theoretical unification of the various denominations and branches of Buddhism. However, this is only accomplished by ignoring worldly common sense and leaping headlong into the sphere of "personal proclamation"—who can insure that this is not just an arbitrary judgment? Even if Murakami is not alone in thinking this way, his logic does not apply in society in general and cannot escape the enclosed world of traditional Buddhists. Thus, the initial impact of *Bukkyō tōitsuron* disappears. In delimiting causes for the setback of the original grand objectives of *Bukkyō tōitsuron*, we can say that, besides the changes of society itself, another may lurk within the questionable diversions of Murakami's own thought.

However, this problem is by no means limited to Murakami. Within academic Buddhist scholarship, soon methods of dealing with the Indian sources were introduced from the West, and before long Buddhist studies in Japan had advanced to the forefront of the world. However, on one hand, touching upon the core values of the established religious organizations that prop up the foundations of scholarship remains a taboo, and it has been decided that scholars will resign themselves to working on the superstructure and not the base. Moreover, in locking the gates of this multilayered structure to the outside world, scholars enclose themselves in a world that is separated from the generally accepted common sense. Thus, this is not simply a problem of the past, but one that continues to be a serious issue today. The problems raised by Murakami and the limits of his work, raise difficulties that are all too immediate to be left locked up in the past.

(Translated by James Mark Shields)

[51] Ibid., p. 541.

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