



Metta

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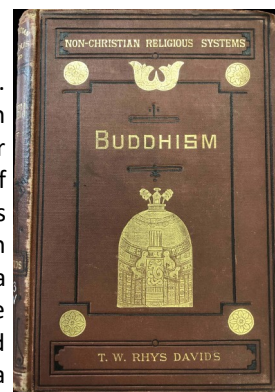
Treasures in the BSC Library of Buddhism and Eastern Philosophy and Culture. Buddhism, The Majority World Religion in 1890?

Kevin Kuniyuki

The BSC Library of Buddhism, Eastern Philosophy and Culture has many forgotten Buddhist Education Resource treasures, which range from trivia to spice up Dharma talks and educational presentations to illustrations, maps and, of course, information on General Buddhism and Shin Buddhism. Unfortunately, due lack of volunteer support, the Library is somewhat disorganized, and during the passage of a few decades has either misplaced or lost a few of its resources. That is why very early during my time as the director I was forced to close open access to the library. But now I have made the decision to at least initiate an assessment and possible reorganization of the Library.

In the midst of this assessment period I have found many items that if identified properly can support the development of Buddhist Educational resources. It goes without saying that it is already a rich resource for those interested in Buddhist Philosophy and Culture. But during this time when we are searching for ways of better communicating the best aspects of Buddhism and Shin Buddhism, my focus is using the Library to specifically do that. In that context, the Library has materials that provide a wide range of resources from material that will enrich more assessible and relevant explanations, through not only knowledge but visually by the use of maps, photographs, illustrations and charts.

One treasure that resides in the Library is the book Buddhism written by T. W. Rhys-Davids and published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1890. You might be already familiar with the prolific scholar of Buddhism and Pali Scripture, Prof. Rhys-Davids, but did you take note of the publisher? This book was part of a series on Non-Christian Religious Systems. My speculation is that this Society very wisely wanted to learn about other religions from someone like Rhys-Davids who was not only a scholar but a proponent of the philosophy of the religion of interest. The book has a fascinating introductory assessment of the Buddhism as a world religion and then a presentation of the history of Gautama Buddha with a survey of Buddhism from the perspective of a Pali scholar.



The table to the right was put together by Rhys-Davids from various government census and other sources. Rhys-Davids, as a good scholar cautions the reader to be aware that there will be people who identify themselves with a religion for social and cultural reasons. That said, the table from page 6 of Rhys-Davids' book, Buddhism, shows that Buddhist account for 40% of the population with a religious identity in 1890, which would indicate that Buddhism was the majority religion at that time.

The following table will show at a glance the relative numbers of the different religions, and the percentage each bears to the whole:—

Parsees ¹	150,000	} being about $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of the total. about 6 pr. cent.
Sikhs ²	1,200,000	
Jews ³	7,000,000	
Greek Catholics ⁴	75,000,000	}
Roman Catholics ⁴	152,000,000	
Other Christians ⁴	100,000,000	
Hindus ⁴	160,000,000	
Muhammadans ⁴	155,000,000	
Buddhists	500,000,000	
Not included in the above ⁴	100,000,000	
Total	1,250,350,000	

(Continued on page 2)

Treasures in the BSC Library of Buddhism and Eastern Philosophy and Culture. Buddhism, The Majority World Religion in 1890?

(Continued from page 1)

Next is another gem from the book, a Map of Buddhism. The darker shaded area is where Buddhism was active in 1890 and the lighter shaded areas are where Buddhism was previously active but not as much in the 19th century.



In the future, I will share with you more of the treasures from the BSC Library of Buddhism and Eastern Philosophy and culture.



The current logo from all the documents I have found was designed in 1992 under the direction of Rev. Yoshiaki Fujitani, when he was director of the Buddhist Study Center. The background of the black circle with the white stripes images a scene of the calm ocean and symbolize serene and tranquil state of mind created by the Buddhist teachings which is represented by the white lotus flower in the center of the logo.

This also symbolizes the BSC, located in Hawaii on the crossroads of the Western cultures and the Oriental cultures, which shares the better understanding of different cultures and contributes towards the peace of human beings and the world.

The white lotus flower symbolizes a stage that is associated with the state of bodhi; that of becoming awakened to the wonders of it all. When one reaches this state it is said that one has mental purity and has reached a state of spiritual perfection.

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Excerpt from Hongwanji Shimpo December 1, 2017

Rev. Michio (Ichido) Tokunaga
Dean, House of Hongwanji Academicians

The Important Thing that Buddhism Teaches Us

My eyes being hindered by blind passions,
 I cannot perceive the light that grasps me;
 Yet the great compassion, without tiring,
 Illumines me always.

(Collected Works of Shinran, Vol. I, p. 385)

Affirming self-promoting desires in today's world

The above wasan is found in the Hymns of the Pure Land Masters in the section 'Hymns on Master Genshin' which praised his teaching, and whose well-known major work is Ojo-yoshu (Essentials for Attaining Birth). We can see that these lines are virtually the same as those found in Shoshinge.

Passions obstruct my eyes and I cannot see the light;
 Nevertheless, great compassion is untiring and illumines me always.

The blind passions mentioned here are none other than those that Sakyamuni expounded, and since they are the core issue of Buddhism, and it can be said that bringing them under control and overcoming them is the aim of the Buddhist Way. However, in today's world, concern for this issue has waned, and we have become unable to see even any trace of them in ourselves.

I experienced the period of hunger and famine during the war years and post-war period during my childhood, so when I think about the affluence of the present day, I become slightly apprehensive as to what the future holds. The reason for this is that it is impossible to compare how fortunate society is with the abundance of material wealth with that of the past, and there is without a doubt that humanity's true nature will continue to seek ever more affluence.

Although we cannot deny that the pursuit of only material wealth is a blind passion, Buddhism teaches us to ask ourselves, "Is there not something more important that we are overlooking?" These two notions are inseparable.

I, who am filled with blind passions, receive the Great Compassion of Amida

It goes without saying that the above notion cannot be negated when one comes to understand the Buddhist teaching. There is a well-known passage in the postscript of the Tannisho (A Record in Lament of Divergences) that states, "...But with a foolish being full of blind passions, in this fleeting world – this burning house...." It is widely known that Shinran often expressed this statement when reflecting on himself, and it undeniable that it is also applicable to each and every one of us.

In this wasan, Shinran includes himself as a foolish being full of blind passions, the main subject of this hymn, and which we cannot disregard.

(Continued on page 7)

The Ballad of Gutoku Ran

This is a historical fiction in the form of a ballad by W.S. Yokoyama. It is based on the later part of Shinran's life inspired by an event of Mr. Yokoyama's later life: the birth of his grandson Subaru who is pictured below.

The Ballad of Gutoku Ran

On a significant event late in the life of Gutoku Shinran

As performed live by Brother W. S. Y. to early morning crowd November 23, 2019

◦ Dogen and Ippen lived to be fifty.
They led significant lives.
At the same time their lives ended at fifty.
What if they had lived longer?

Shinran lived to be ninety.
There was more he experienced as he went forward into the landscape.
At the age of sixty-five he became a grandfather.

◦ I was the same age when I became a grandfather.
I can well imagine how Shinran must have felt.
My father once mentioned to me
When Ojii-chan came to Hawaii he picked you up.
I was too small to remember.
At first I wondered why my father even mentioned
this small detail from our life in Hilo.
He only mentioned it once.
But now I know he told me since he too thought it was significant.

◦ Now I know how my grandfather must have felt when he picked me up.
It is the way every grandfather throughout time must feel
as he cradles this small warm bundle in his arms.
As he looks down he sees those bright little eyes looking up at him for the longest time.
In that one moment you connect your grandchild reveals to you the secret of life.
But you do not realize it until you become a grandfather yourself.

◦ This is a most significant event in Shinran's life.
If it is significant it ought to appear in the biography of his life, right?
But the official Life of Shinran does not mention it at all.
In fact the official bio of his life make his final years seem as if nothing happened.
In fact that is not the case.
So much happened.

◦ To be sure we do not forget
Kakushinni must have asked Yuien to make a record of that time.
Love, you remember your promise to me, yes?
she said to him smiling wanly.
He nodded.
He could see she was dying.
In my unwritten historical fictional account of Shinran's life
this is what I purport is the origin of the *Tannisho*.

◦ First we need to draw up a cast of characters to appear in our cosmic drama.

◦ Cast of characters

◦ Shinran 1173–1262 x Eshinni 1182–1268
◦ ◦ Zenran 1210*–1292
◦ ◦ ◦ Nyoshin 1235–1300
◦ ◦ Kakushinni 1224–1283
◦ ◦ ◦ Kakue 1238–1307
◦ ◦ ◦ Kakunyo 1270–1351



Subaru

(Continued on page 5)

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- Ononomiya Zennen ca. 1200*–1275
- ◦ Yuien 1222–1288 (Tannisho comp.)
- ◦ Yuizen 1253*1266*–1317

◦ It looks like a regular family tree, does it not.
But when Kakushinni decides to remarry
she ties the neat lines of the family tree into a pretzel.

◦ Kakushinni the youngest daughter of Shinran
has her first son when Shinran is sixty-five.
Kakue might not be his first grandson.
But he is important as the father of Kakunyo.
The Honganji would grow out of the actual historical lineage
of Kakushinni–Kakue–Kakunyo.

◦ No ordinary woman Kakushinni had visionary plans for Shinran's legacy.
She conceived the idea to build a memorial hall after he died.
To get the land she married an elderly man who had land.
He was one of Shinran's student and with his cooperation
she obtained the legal deed to the land on which
to realize her dream of building a memorial hall for Shinran
the origin of the present-day Honganji.

◦ Kakushinni's second husband Ononomiya Zennen was a well known poet.
There is a waka ascribed to him late in life on a triangular love affair
compiled in the Sengohyakuban uta awase that roughly translates as ...

◦ *Oh, look at this old tree I have become!*
◦ *How can I meet her again when she returns from three-ring mountain,*
◦ *after hearing her voice—that young cedar so indifferent to me—*
◦ *moaning under the fresh blanket of snow!*
◦
◦ *kogarashi ya ikani machi mimu miwa no yama tsurenaki sugi no yukioire no koe*

◦ Here, assuming he had indeed composed it,
Zennen is having some fun at his own expense.
His young wife has run off with her lover to three-ring mountain,
symbolic of a triangular love affair.
But since Zennen was a wealthy man,
or at least the owner of property in Kyoto,
we can only assume he was willing to marry a widow half his age,
knowing she was not in love with him.
He must have known she would not be the typical wife
nor was she the ordinary woman.
He was happy to help her along all the same
and just as happy to stay out of her way.
We can well imagine that whenever he thought of his situation
he would start to chuckle.
Sometimes when no one was around
and the moon was shining down on the garden
he would stand there hands on hips and laugh out loud.
But he was a man of fine poetic sensibilities and consoled himself thinking,
At least I got a good poem out of it!.

◦ Examining the family tree we see Ononomiya Zennen has a second son named Yuien.
Yuien is two years older than Kakushinni.
The fact she is now his stepmother does not prevent the two from becoming intimate.
The *Yui* in the name Yuizen suggests he is the probable father.

◦
◦ Kakushinni's plan to build a memorial hall indicates



Kakushinni

(Continued on page 6)

A Rebirth Indescribably Grand

The Buddha of Infinite Life
Resides far away to the West;
In His Pure Land there is no strife,
And no being there is oppressed.

The Pure Land of Peace and Bliss
Is the goal of all who aspire
To Buddhahood, out from the mire
Where fools are deceived by a kiss.

Amida created His Land
Penetrated with blissful Nirvana,
Where beings from painful samsara
Can join the redeemed joyful band.

The way to the Pure Land is simple:
Say the Nembutsu and by it be saved;
For all who are evil or depraved,
Rebirth there's assured to those people.

Amida gave power to His Name
Through His Primal Vow ancient, fulfilled:
His Light brighter than Sun's flame--
Through it all our worries are stilled.

The Nembutsu is not for the saint
Engrossed in a regime of effort:
For those without courage or faint,
Their leap to the Pure Land is short.

Master Shinran has opened our eyes
To Amida Buddha's transferred merit;
By His Vow-Power He came to share it
To transform us into Buddhas, all-wise.

In the twinkling of an eye we'll be born,
Never again to suffer from karma--
All our burdens of evil now shorn,
Saved once and for all from samsara.

Transformed from this sad bombu birth
Into Buddhas we'll be in His Land,
Know ye what the Primal Vow's worth:
Invaluable, incalculable, grand!

Namu Amida Butsu
Thank You, Amida Buddha

Gassho,
Richard St. Clair
(Shaku Egen)

(Continued from page 5)

she was someone who had won the trust of Shinran's disciples.
In fact the story of how Shinran disowned his eldest son
(which is incidentally out of character for him to do)
shifts the spotlight to Kakushinni as the person of trust.

- Kakushinni had a clear strategy how to address the crisis
the Shin community was now facing.
She would put her plan into action once her child was born
and the deed to the land was all but assured.
- Another plan that is likely her idea was to have Yuien compose the Tannisho.
Of course she did not call him up one evening and say,
"Hiya, hun, uh, would you mind writing the Tannisho for me?"
The Tannisho was tied to two separate decisions:
 - (1) who would be the heir to Shinran's teaching and
 - (2) who would be the next custodian of the memorial hall.
- Originally the Tannisho had another document attached to it
that dealt with who would be the heir to the teaching.
It was compiled (I think) by Yuien who called it *Shinran Shonin
kecchimyaku monju*.
In the same document Shinran relates
how Honen indicated him as the heir to his teaching
by allowing him to copy the *Senchakushu* and to make a portrait of him.
Here it is important to note that Shinran used the heir's spiritual lineage,
that is, his (or her) understanding of the Pure Land teaching,
as the criterion rather than blood lineage.
- It is probably in the time of Rennyo that the *Kecchimyaku monju*
is lopped off from the end of the Tannisho.
Since it indicates someone else as the heir to the teaching,
this is the document Rennyo does not want people to see.
- The *Tannisho* itself remained in circulation.
The Otani University Museum has a *Tannisho* copy dated 1519.
That is only twenty years after Rennyo's death.
But already at this point the *Kecchimyaku monju* is not attached to it.
- We might laugh at Rennyo's fears as imaginary.
After all what is there to fear.
But the CWS also does not give us a full translation of the
Kecchimyaku monju.
Nor does anyone dare to append it to the *Tannisho*.
- As to who would be the next custodian of the memorial hall
the criterion was blood lineage.
When Kakushinni chose Kakue over Yuizen, it made Yuizen furious.
After all his father Zennen was the one who had given Kakushinni
the deed to the land it was built on.
It was possibly at this point Yuien had to tell him the truth
as to who his real father was.
- With the selection of Kakue the next heir to the custodianship would be Kakunyo.
But Yuizen again protested.
Kakue died as a result of exposure to the cold
some months after Yuizen took the key to the memorial hall
from him by force one winter night.
Yuizen then struggled with Kakunyo for the right to be heir to the lineage.
Kecchimyaku monju that indicates Shinran had someone else in mind
as the heir to his spiritual lineage.
His own child would continue the blood lineage.

(continued next issue)

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We gratefully welcome memorial donations and donations in all forms. We are now on Paypal! There is a link on our website. Please make all checks payable to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. Thank You.

A Visit by Shakuhachi Master, John Neptune

Last year, in the month of November, the BSC Shakuhachi Club was fortunate to be visited by the world recognized shakuhachi master, John Neptune. He was in Hawaii to support the North American premiere of his son, David Neptune's movie "Words Can't Go There" at the Hawaii International Film Festival. The documentary film, directed by David, is about his father's story struggles and achievements in the world of shakuhachi in Japan. Among



From right to left: Rv. Thomas Okano, John Neptune, Bruce Miyoda and Darin Miyashiro

the people interviewed is Genzan Miyoshi who is John's teacher in Japan. It is also a little-known fact the John's first teacher Rev. Thomas Okano, who taught John before he continued on to go to Kyoto to study with Genzan Miyoshi.

The members of the BSC Shakuhachi Club were able to attend a free workshop conducted by John about his methods practice and paly on November 7 and then accompanied him during a song that John played during an event held after the screening of "Words Can't Go There" at the Hawaii International Film Festival.

The BSC Shakuhachi Club will hosting again this year, workshops by Genzan Miyoshi in July, and possibly John Neptune in June. Although plans for the Neptune workshop are tentative at this time.

(Continued from page 3)

This wasan takes up the issue of overcoming one's blind passions and answers it. Namely, for the very reason that I possess blind passions, I am the object of the salvific working of Amida's Great Compassion.

According to the notes he inscribed in his own copy of the wasan, Shinran reveals the distinguishing feature of the working of Amida's Great Compassion. Although I may not be aware of or able to see it because my own self-centered interests and motivation impair my ability to do so, the Tathagata's working it is never idle or neglectful for even a moment. Thus, he writes that it is continuous and "untiring."

However, it must be understood that this provides a different perspective of the issue of our possessing blind passions.

Translation by Gene Sekiya

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Upcoming Events

Meditation with Pat Jichaku: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at
11:30 AM

Chozenji Zen Meditation: Tuesdays at 5:30 PM

BSC Shakuhachi Club: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and
Thursdays

Yoga with Lisa Yanagi: Wednesdays at 5 PM

YESS Camp CPK Fundraiser: March 9, Ala Moana

Buddhist Discussion Group: March 16, 23 at 11 AM
April 20, 27 at 11 AM

YESS Camp: April 10—12, Camp Palehua

