

# The Modern and the Spiritual in Late Meiji Japan

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This study attempts to describe the categories of “modern” and “spiritual” as they emerged in late Meiji Japan surrounding the debate around the Three Religions Conference in 1912. Though the Meiji period (1868-1912) began with the “restoration” of the emperor to a political role as the head of the newly formed government, by the late Meiji period religious and political voices began to argue that the work of “restoration” had been only partially accomplished and a “second restoration” - a “spiritual restoration” was needed. This study will examine the thought of politician Tokonami Takejirô who articulated this call for a “second restoration”, as well as voices of discontent such as the Higashi Honganji school, New Buddhist writers and Christian theologian Uchimura Kanzô.

**Key Words :** Three Religions Conference, Meiji Restoration, Interreligious Dialogue, New Buddhism, Tokonami Takejirô

## Introduction

This paper will attempt to examine some of the issues that emerged during the late Meiji period surrounding the Three Religions Conference (*Sankyô kaidô*), which was held under the auspices of the Home Office (*Naimushô*) in February 1912. The Three Religions Conference was, at its most basic level, a joint conference held by the Meiji government between four sets of participants: the Meiji government; Shintô denominations, Buddhist sects and schools; and Christian churches. The government’s official purpose of the conference was the translation

of the spiritual and religious teachings of the religions into the moral and ideological policy of the state. However, political leaders, religionists and educators all used the conference for their various ideological and doctrinal ends.<sup>1</sup> Specifically in this paper, I plan to examine how the government, politicians and religionists understood the categories of the modern and the spiritual in late Meiji Japan. In order to accomplish this, we will examine the thought of Tokonami Takejirô (1866-1935), a Meiji to early Shôwa period politician and bureaucrat, with respect to his own understanding of modernity and spirituality. The Three Religions Conference developed as the plan of Home Office (*naimushô*) Vice-Minister Tokonami Takejirô and occasioned a public debate of considerable breadth in both the political and religious worlds. The conference and the

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public debate surrounding it formed a significant moment in the relationship of religion and the state, through the assertion by politicians and religionists that Japan was in need of a spiritual “second restoration.”

Though the Meiji period (1868-1912) had begun with a “restoration” of the emperor to a political role as the head of the newly formed Japanese government, by the late Meiji period religious and political voices began to argue that this “restoration” had been only partially accomplished. It was increasingly argued that though the Meiji Restoration (*Meiji ishin*) had functioned to provide new forms of governmental, industrial, military and intellectual thought and practice, it had lacked a “spiritual” content capable of societal reform. Tokonami’s call for a spiritual “second restoration,” as a means of completing what was begun during the Meiji Restoration, assumed certain categories of what I would like to call “the modern” and at the same time, attempted to harness the authority of religious groups for the furtherance of Meiji state planning. While many Shintô, Buddhist and Christian leaders supported the idea of the conference, the plan was not without opposition. As a means of attempting to describe some of the contours of a late Meiji period self-understanding of the modern and the spiritual, I will also examine three voices of dissent that can be seen as in sharp dialogue with the plan of the Meiji state.

The Three Religions Conference was attended by seventy-one representatives of religious groups officially recognized or invited by the Meiji government.<sup>2</sup> Shintô denominations and Buddhist sects attended because the abbots of each denomination and sect were appointed through a licensure system known as the “abbot system” (*kanchô seido*). This system was administered by the Religious Affairs Bureau (*shûkyô kyoku*) under the Home Office. In spite of attendance by most groups at the conference, the Ôtani school of Higashi Honganji raised objections to the conference, and in the end refused to attend. Through their voice, we will seek to glean some insights into the categories of the modern and the spiritual as it emerged in the debate surrounding the plan of Tokonami Takejirô.

We will also look briefly at the New Buddhist critique of the plan, as well as a critique forwarded by Christian theologian Uchimura Kanzô. Uchimura, of course, was not invited to attend the conference because of the radically independent nature of his own Christian self-understanding. Founder of the “Non-church Movement” (*Mukyôkai undô*), Uchimura raised issues that, though stemming from his own faith, were not dissimilar to the objections raised by Higashi Honganji. Through these three voices of dissent, two Buddhist and one Christian, I hope that we will be able to see some of the contours of a late Meiji self-understanding of the modern and the spiritual.

### Tokonami Takejirô - A Call for “Spiritual Restoration”

On January 12, 1912, the daily newspaper, *Yorozu chôhô*, printed an article titled “The Plan to Use Religion” (*Shûkyô riyô no keikaku*).<sup>3</sup> The article began with the subtitle “Abandonment of Ninomiya Sect,” and went on to explain that the Home Office, under the leadership of the previous Home Office Minister, Hirata Tôsuke (1849-1925), had emphasized the *Hôtoku* sect founded in rural areas by Tokugawa reformer Ninomiya Sontoku. The *Hôtoku* sect had been developed by Ninomiya as a means of assisting rural communities in the development of “local self-autonomy” (*chihô jichi*), and the article reported that the government had been supporting the deployment of lecturers from the *Hôtoku* sect to advance governmental policy. However, after the collapse of the second Katsura Tarô Cabinet in August 1911, the newly established second Cabinet of Saionji Kinmochi abandoned this emphasis on Ninomiya Sontoku. Home Office Vice-Minister Tokonami Takejirô, it was reported, focused instead upon the possible contributions toward national moral leadership that could be made by the three religions of Shintô, Buddhism and Christianity.<sup>4</sup> The *Yorozu chôhô* asked the crucial question of whether this shift in governmental policy was only a clever means of governmental use of religion, or whether this new policy

shift indicated a new plan to actually connect the three religions in some new way to the government.

Tokonami Takejirō graduated from the Department of Political Science of Tokyo Imperial University in July 1890, and entered government service assigned to the Ministry of Finance. Beginning in 1893, he successively held high positions in a number of prefectures, and in 1894 was transferred to the Home Office. In 1904 at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, Tokonami was appointed as Governor of Tokushima Prefecture, and in 1905 was appointed as Home Office Regional Bureau Chief. It was in this capacity that Tokonami traveled to Europe and the United States in 1909 to observe regulatory systems of societies in Europe and the United States. Tokonami published his findings in 1910 in the book *Ôbei shōkan* (*Impressions of the West*). In early 1911, he was appointed Home Office Vice-Minister in the second Saionji Cabinet, under Home Office Minister Hara Takashi.<sup>5</sup>

*Ôbei shōkan* reveals Tokonami's concerns about the future of Japan and its spiritual well-being. The first chapter, titled "*Shinnen*" (faith), began with a sentence that hinted at the central themes of the book: "Faith is most certainly the foundation of civilization."<sup>6</sup> Tokonami, impressed by the power of religion that he had observed in the United States and Europe to regulate and order society, described laws that existed in England, France and Germany prohibiting the sale of alcohol and the closing of amusements on Sundays, because Sunday was a religious day of rest, and reported that the Bible was the one book that was present in nearly all homes - concluding that these various aspects of societal regulation were "based upon faith."<sup>7</sup> Though Tokonami's impressions, mainly about Christianity, can seem idealized and naïve - not seeming to recognize that Christianity in Europe and the United States existed in cooperation, debate and conflict with other religions and systems of thought - he did use his findings to reflect upon Japanese society.<sup>8</sup>

Recalling the Charter Oath at the time of the Meiji Restoration in 1868, he wrote that what was needed

at the end of the Meiji era was a "second restoration" (*dai ni ishin*), which would result in the "cultivation of faith" (*shinnen no yōsei*).<sup>9</sup> Reflecting upon the religious tumult of the early Meiji period, Tokonami wrote,

Buddhist temples in shrines were destroyed, and for a time the destruction of Christianity and the destruction of Buddhism were attempted; however, freedom of belief was later recognized by means of the Constitution. Yet, though freedom of belief exists, has not the society of our land become cold and indifferent to a sense of faith? Does it not seem like our nation is moving forward without a sense of faith?<sup>10</sup>

As Tokonami reflected on early Meiji religious history, he argued that the faith of the nation had suffered loss and damage as Buddhism was separated from Shintō through the Separation Edicts (*shinbutsu bunri rei*) of 1868, and as Christianity struggled under a renewed edict of prohibition. In an attempt to correct this historical tragedy, Tokonami proposed that "For the cultivation of 'national morality', education and religion must for the first time come completely together."<sup>11</sup> This could only occur if education (which had been a discursive field solely managed by the state through the Imperial Rescript on Education) and religion (which had been removed from the "official" state sponsored field of education) were brought together out of their "isolation" (*koritsu*) from one another.<sup>12</sup>

The argument that *both* education and religion were crucial for the spiritual and moral development of the nation contained a veiled criticism of the national educational system, which had sought to completely separate religion from education through rescripts and ordinances such as the Imperial rescript on Education and Directive #12 of the Ministry of Education. Tokonami came to openly express his doubts about the adequacy of the educational system as capable of cultivating the spiritual aspect of the nation in an article that appeared in the Buddhist journal *Shūkyōkai* in 1911. Tokonami wrote,

I really wonder at present, whether or not the stature of current moral education, as being carried out by schools, can completely carry out the moral cultivation of the nation. The situation is one in which I have serious doubts.<sup>13</sup>

Tokonami asked if the different characteristics that he saw between rural dwellers, who were “honest” and “aware” of the natural world around them, and urban dwellers, who were “clever, but also weak,” would not be changed if, “the true self were polished through fellowship and contact with a place without form, a place without smell or voice.”<sup>14</sup> Through such a description, Tokonami was attempting to describe a spiritual world, which though it did not exist in state education, was, he believed, accessible through the mediation of religious groups.

Reflecting upon the Restoration, he wrote,

Our ancestors held firm faith and deep beliefs. It is not that our nation does not have faith at the present, but the reforms carried out at the time of the Restoration were too abrupt. As scientific knowledge made rapid progress, little by little religion lost its power to reform, and in general, the faith to celebrate the *kami*, the *hotoke* and other deities has come to be ignored...There is no faith; there is no belief. Accordingly, there is no awe about places that people do not see. This is a most uncertain situation.<sup>15</sup>

Tokonami argued that though the content of the spiritual may be distinguished as “*shinnen*” (faith) or “*shinkō*” (belief), they both expressed a single ideal.<sup>16</sup> This meant according to Tokonami, that the *kami*, *hotoke*, *goddo* (the Christian deity) and *ten* (signifying Confucianism) were not different realities. Tokonami argued that the basic problem of the age was the task of solidifying national character through the creation of a “spirit of national vigor” (*kokumin no genki seishin*).<sup>17</sup>

Tokonami recalled his experience as the governor of Tokushima Prefecture during the Russo-Japanese War, writing,

When I look back on the circumstances of the time when I was working in Tokushima Prefecture as the governor during the Russo-Japanese War, it was ordinarily a situation without the *kami* and the *hotoke*. However, when people visited shrines and temples with sincerity, they became earnest; and thus, I was deeply moved and surprised when the *kami* and the *hotoke* became active in the world.<sup>18</sup>

Tokonami suggested that sincere religious activity could help the nation recover a sense of profound spiritual experience and vigor. Arguing that the Restoration had been brought about by the earnest struggles of statesmen who lived between life and death, Tokonami stated that the current era of late Meiji leaders had no choice than to *continue* the work of the Restoration amidst the press of current circumstances.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, rather than politics as usual, Tokonami called for a “second restoration” writing,

A reinvigorated stage must be added continuing the construction of contemporary civilization. The energy of a second restoration must be brought about, and a civilization with a strong foundation must be achieved. The future energy of the nation must be reinvigorated. In order to create moral character, there is no other choice than the cultivation of faith...If faith comes to exist, traces of corruption by politicians and the mistrust of those in business will be wiped away.<sup>20</sup>

After Tokonami became Home Office Vice-Minister in September 1911, the opportunity to implement these ideas materialized and he began conversations about holding an interreligious conference.

Further, there is evidence that Tokonami was also deeply influenced by British politician David Lloyd George, and a speech given by Lloyd George at an ecumenical conference of fifteen hundred religious leaders held in Cardiff, Wales in December 1911.<sup>21</sup> At the Three Religions Conference in February 1912, Tokonami used the speech by Lloyd George, distributing printed copies translated into Japanese to the participants. In his speech at Cardiff, Lloyd George

had addressed the importance of “united churches” upon British public opinion in the battle against the social ills of Edwardian society, stating that it was the “business of the churches” to keep the nation vigilant until “the spectacle of wretchedness, woe and despair shall be transfigured into one of happiness and hope.”<sup>22</sup>

Though the Cardiff conference may not have been the actual source of the idea for a conference of the three religions, it is quite possible that the concept of various Christian denominations setting aside sectarian differences and uniting in the work toward resolution of social issues in Great Britain confirmed in Tokonami the idea that such a type of conference could have merit in Japan. The social problems faced by Meiji society after the Russo-Japanese War and the Great Treason Incident (*taigyaku jiken*) may have made Tokonami particularly receptive to the plan expressed by Lloyd George. In any event, when a plan for a conference finally began to unfold in January 1912, it was a plan for a conference of the abbots of Shintô and Buddhism with the unusual inclusion of Christian representatives. For Tokonami, it was a vision of three religions united toward a common goal of restoring the public character of religion as a spiritual force that could aid the government in remedying the social ills of late Meiji Japan.<sup>23</sup>

In March 1912, Tokonami published a book of essays titled, *A Plan Promoting Local Autonomous Government (Chihô jichi oyobi shinkô saku)*. The work was about the fostering of local autonomy, so that local areas could order their communities without national oversight because, as Tokonami wrote,

It is not good that governmental bureaucrats perform all tasks. Things must be performed as a unity of the emperor and his subjects. They must be performed through the cooperation of the government and the people together, as the national government.”<sup>24</sup>

Tokonami envisioned a unity of both governmental oversight and local leadership, going to far as to write, “local autonomous government is the foundation of the state.”<sup>25</sup>

Religion played an integral role in Tokonami’s plan. Looking back at the Restoration, Tokonami argued that the separation of Shintô and Buddhism had injured a sense of reverence for the *kami* and the *hotoke*, as well as damaging the faith of Christianity through a policy that sought to destroy it.<sup>26</sup> If the Restoration and the modernity that it unleashed could be marked by a potential to destroy religious experience, Tokonami argued that it was now time to reclaim a sense of spiritual reverence that had been lost after the Restoration. In order to build a foundation for national morality (*kokumin dôtoku*), it was necessary that religion and education proceed together.<sup>27</sup> Tokonami argued that the great and singular mission before religionists was to enter in partnership for both religion and the state. This, he argued, would result in greater respect among the populace for the spiritual world and result in a world civilization of peace.<sup>28</sup>

Tokonami’s plan for local autonomy and the inclusion of the religions was structured in such a way as to place the three religions of Shintô, Buddhism and Christianity in a unity with one another, attempting to reclaim a unity of three religions that had been ruptured during the early years of the Restoration. In the preface to the massive work, *Meiji ishin shinbutsu bunri shiryô* (The Annals of the Separation of Shintô and Buddhism), Buddhist historian Murakami Senshō wrote,

In reality, the failure of the three religions of Shintô, Confucianism, and Buddhism during the Tokugawa period became, after the establishment of the Meiji government, a rupturing of the three religions.<sup>29</sup>

One significant aspect of Tokonami’s plan to gather the religions was, in a sense, an attempt to reclaim a sense of spiritual and religious unity, a worldview that had arguably been, if not destroyed, then at least badly damaged in the early Meiji period. What was new was the inclusion of Christianity in this new pattern of state advocated religious experience. If the early experience of Japan’s attempt at the construction of a modern state meant that the fabric of religious and spiritual experience had been violently torn,

Tokonami's plan was an open call to attempt to reweave the spiritual fabric of Japan's modern experience. It was no accident that Tokonami used the historically accepted phrasing of "Shintô, Confucianism and Buddhism three religions in unity" (*shin ju butsu sankyô itchi*), reinventing it with the phrase, "Shintô, Buddhism, Christianity three religions together" (*shin butsu kirisuto no sankyô tomo ni*).<sup>30</sup> If, as Murakami asserted, the Restoration brought with it a rupturing or destruction of one model of ancient spiritual experience, Tokonami hoped that a new model of spiritual and interreligious experience could be brought into being. However, for Tokonami this would always mean three religions together in the promotion of "national morality" (*kokumin dôtoku*) - three religions in unity for the imperial state.

### Voices of Discontent

Though the plan for a conference of three religions was accepted by most religious groups, there were voices of discontent, notably Buddhist and Christian. For Buddhists, the sensitive issue at stake was the abbot system. In late 1911 Tokonami met quietly with leaders of Christianity to negotiate the possibility of Christian attendance at an interreligious conference.<sup>31</sup> Christian leaders had reportedly indicated a willingness to participate if the Home Office did not advocate "ancestor worship" (*senzo sūhai*) and "shrine visitation" (*jinja sankei*) as had been advocated by the previous Katsura Cabinet. After this understanding had been quietly reached, Ôgusa Eijitsu (1857-1912) of the Tokyo branch of the Kyoto Higashi Honganji temple complex, met with Religious Affairs Bureau Chief Shiba Junrokurô on January 7, 1912.<sup>32</sup> Ôgusa voiced strong opposition to the Home Office plan, arguing that the plan made fools out of Buddhism and Shintô who, under the abbot system, were required to attend, while Christianity, bound by no such regulation was free to do as it pleased. Ôgusa heatedly stated that if the Home Office planned to ignore the abbot system and invite Christianity, then Higashi Honganji would henceforth act with

"complete freedom."<sup>33</sup>

Though Nishi Honganji did participate in the conference, one of its clerics, Akamatsu Renjô (1841-1919) who had been a member of the first Buddhist delegation to the West in 1871-72, stated that though closer government contact with the religions was essentially a good thing, until there was a "religion law" (*shûkyô hô*) that treated all the religions in the same manner, the government should refrain from holding such a conference as Christianity did not possess the same qualifications as Buddhism.<sup>34</sup> In addition, a group of representatives of several Buddhist traditions also met at Sensôji temple in Tokyo on January 24, 1912 to discuss the Home Office plan.<sup>35</sup> In this meeting, leaders reiterated the problem of the abbot system and Christianity which stood outside of this system and its governmental oversight. Andô Reigan (1870-1943), of the Ôtani school, argued that only religious leaders with qualifications of equal rank (*dôtô no shikaku*) should be allowed to attend.<sup>36</sup> Mochizuki Shinkô, executive director of the Jôdo sect, stated that though Shintô and Buddhism received their duties by imperial order (*chokumin*) and operated under the threat of governmental sanction (*seisai*), Christianity was "unapproved" and many of its pastors took part in political activities, freely acting without the burden of state sanctions which restricted Shintô and Buddhism.<sup>37</sup>

These and similar arguments pointed to an element in the Home Office plan that sought to treat all the religions as equals, regardless of religious tradition or ecclesiastical rank and office. Such a plan had the effect of flattening the historical and doctrinal distinctions that existed within interreligious relationships. I would argue that this was an emerging mark of "the modern" in interreligious relationships whereby historical and theological understandings of clerical position and rank were to be set aside in the aid of interreligious cooperation. As long as the abbot system continued to exist, it continued to be difficult for the religions to see themselves as equals in dialogue with the government.

Higashi Honganji issued a statement explaining

its decision not to participate with the Home Office plan as advocated by Tokonami Takejirō.

Higashi Honganji, regardless of the attitudes of other religious groups, with confident independence, absents itself, and no matter what difficulties are encountered in the future, must stress the following: 1) Concerning its relationship to religious faith, the state, without regard for the spiritual authority; the religious history and doctrine; and the morality of religion, randomly attempts to equally unite religion with itself. It also must be said that any cooperation with education is very careless. 2) Regarding religion, each religion is an unconditional entity, and does not have room to, in the slightest way, harmonize or cooperate with others. The current conference, will not only result in doubt for believers, but will give hesitation to a self-conscious nation. Further, the attempt by the Home Office to change the shape of the conference to a type of friendly consultation, different from their first intention, is offensive, and in this regard we have no other choice but to voice our absolute disapproval.<sup>38</sup>

The defiance of Higashi Honganji is significant because it took the emerging modernist paradigm of interreligious cooperation that the Home Office had advocated, and staunchly rejected it. According to Higashi Honganji, each religion was an “unconditional entity” that should not, and could not, harmonize with others. This fierce declaration of independence was meant to include not only other religious groups, but also the government. In spite of the fact that Tokonami Takejirō had advocated “spiritual restoration,” the protest by Higashi Honganji signaled an alternative understanding of “the spiritual.” The “spiritual authority” or “spiritual ground” (*seishinjō no konkyō*) of religion was located in the *difference* of historical, doctrinal and moral teachings of each sect, denomination or church. What was offensive to the ground of faith for Higashi Honganji lay in the notion that the government could compress and level

the religious topography that existed between communities of faith, each of which existed with different histories, doctrines and ethical teachings. If the Home Office sought to gather religionists of differing ranks and positions it misunderstood that even different ecclesiastical offices had historical and doctrinal underpinnings. Though the abbot system, managed by the Home Office, sought to create administrative unity across differing Shintō and Buddhist histories and doctrines, the inclusion of Christianity threatened to rupture this fragile unity.

The “New Buddhist movement” (*shinbukkyō undō*) began as the “Association of New Buddhists” (*Shinbukkyō dōshikai*) in 1903, as the successor to the Association of Buddhist Puritans” (*Bukkyō seito dōshikai*, est. 1899), and by 1912 was carrying out a fierce attack upon the abbot system.<sup>39</sup> New Buddhist (*shinbukkyō*) writers railed against governmental regulation of religion through the abbot system. New Buddhist writer, Tsuge Akiune wrote,

Abolish the abbot system! We urge that [religious] power be returned. To reiterate, we demand that Buddhism be set free like Christianity!<sup>40</sup>

Tsuge, argued that Home Office interference in sectarian administration policies had resulted in the “destruction” (*hakai*) of religious administrative policies by the abbots.<sup>41</sup> In other words, because of the intrusion of governmental supervision, the sects had lost their ability to oversee their own traditions in accordance with their different historical and religious principles. According to Tsuge, under such a system of governmental “protection,” religion was not allowed to freely develop. Therefore, the abolishment of the abbot system would allow a “great revolution” (*dai kakumei*) to occur by offering freedom to Buddhism, which would restore the health and vigor of religion.<sup>42</sup> To aid this effort, on February 2, 1912, New Buddhist writers formed the “Association of Buddhist Journalists” (*Bukkyō shugi kishakai*) and issued a statement that urged the Home Office to call off any plan of a conference between the religions, and instead, engage in “prudent study” of the topic. It further called

on all Buddhist sects and schools to boycott the proposed government sponsored event.<sup>43</sup>

In this way, the protest of Higashi Honganji and the New Buddhist writers clearly identified religious experience as a reality that must exist independently of governmental oversight if it were to remain faithful to its various historical manifestations. As both groups hinted, the very faith of the adherents of Buddhist sects depended upon this independence.

Finally, as a counter-point to the protest made by Buddhists, I would like to examine, briefly, one Christian voice of protest. Writing in November 1912, at the beginning of the Taishō period, Uchimura Kanzō (1861-1930) looked back upon the religious policy of the Meiji period and argued (similarly to Higashi Honganji) that governmental policy has constantly shifted and changed throughout the period. Recognizing the policy shift from the Katsura Cabinet to the Saionji Cabinet, Uchimura wrote,

After the *Hōtoku* sect, another thing, the Three Religions Conference appeared. At that time in Japan, voices arose that a beautiful new bird had been formed from the peacock, the crane and the parrot. At that time, we who cling to the Gospel of Christ were mocked because of our narrowness of opinion. It was not Christianity, nor was it Buddhism...it was something skillfully offered to the Japanese people by the leaders of the government. However, one year later, what has happened to it? Who speaks of the Three Religions Conference? The Three Religions Conference was no more than a brief and idle pastime; what was thought to be a rare and beautiful bird was in reality, a monster, like the nue. It was like a dayfly, born in the morning, only to die before the day was over.<sup>44</sup>

Like the criticism of Higashi Honganji that each religion was an “unconditional entity,” Uchimura argued that a unity of different religious groups would cause Buddhism to cease to be Buddhism and Christianity to cease to be Christianity. In the end, governmental policy that sought to foster interreligious unity

actually destroyed any real possibility of unity *by not grappling with the issue of religious difference*. As Higashi Honganji sought to retain the unique independence of its faith, thereby protecting the faith of its adherents; Uchimura also argued similarly that the content of the Christian faith was an unchanging Christ, incompatible with constant change in governmental policy.

## Conclusion

Higashi Honganji, New Buddhists, and Christians like Uchimura argued that religion was a spiritual experience that could not be fettered by government regulation. Even though religionists and politicians called for a spiritual “second restoration” at the end of the Meiji period, the actual category of “the spiritual” and how this was to be related to the State, remained an embattled topography. Governmental attempts to bring religious leaders together of different clerical office, as we have seen, suggested a flattening of the historical and doctrinal difference that existed between, not only between different religions, but also between different schools within the same sect. For example, there was some question about the difference in rank of the abbots of the Honganji schools with the abbots of other Buddhist sects and schools. It was held that the Nishi and Higashi Honganji *hosshu* (abbots) occupied a position of rank above the *kanchō* (abbots) of other sects, implying that the *hosshu* were above participating in gatherings with lesser ranking *kanchō*.<sup>45</sup> In this situation the Buddhist press argued that, “Higashi Honganji should take the lead in the reform of temple law, for as long as the system of a *hosshu* being above a *kanchō*, and a *kanchō* being below a *hosshu* exists, the current system is unsuited for the circumstances of religion today.”<sup>46</sup>

This argument hinted at an emerging knot of problems that the Home Office policy had brought to the fore, namely, that in a climate of emerging interreligious plurality, distinctions of clerical rank and privilege might have to be laid aside for the sake of dialogue and cooperative work. The difference

between “abbots,” “bishops,” and “representatives,” of course, also implied differences of religious polity, tradition and doctrine. However, when viewed by the Home Office, the government only seemed to acknowledge the administrative function of the clerical office, rather than also recognizing that such offices are grounded upon theological, doctrinal and historical self-understandings that might make interreligious cooperation difficult. For Higashi Honganji and the New Buddhist writers, the abbot system itself was the critical issue that placed a layer of governmental administration between religious leaders and their sect’s membership. If the spiritual, as mediated by historical religious forms, such as Buddhist and Shintō rites and traditions, was truly an unconditionally independent category, then governmental attempts to regulate spiritual experience, no matter how well intended, would only continue to exacerbate misunderstanding and frustration among the religions. The addition of Christianity to a government recognized framework of three religions could only heighten Buddhist advocacy for the abolishment of government oversight and the implementation of laws guaranteeing freedom of belief. One outcome of this debate was the clarity of voices that argued that religion, or the spiritual, should be a realm independent of governmental administrative structure.

Finally, the call for a “second restoration,” itself was a concept fraught with different understandings. For example, it had become clear by the middle of the Meiji period that something had gone wrong in the Restoration. In 1893, Christian writer Yokoi Tokio, argued in *Shūkyōjō no kakushin (The Reform of Religion)* that a “religious and moral reformation” (*shūkyōjō dōtoku no kaikaku*) was needed to complement the various reforms that had already occurred since the beginning of the Meiji period.<sup>47</sup> Yokoi argued that it was no longer the time for religious maintenance of tradition; but rather, “Our nation is hard pressed by the necessity of a second restoration, it is not the time for maintenance it is the time for revolution; it is not the time for peace, it is the time

for disruptive action.”<sup>48</sup> Of course, Yokoi advocated his own Christian position, much like Higashi Honganji and the New Buddhist writers twenty years later.

When Tokonami Takejirō called for a “second restoration,” he was echoing the voices of other religionists and politicians who had also been sensing that something had been missing from the modernity of the Meiji Restoration.<sup>49</sup> However, as we have seen, it became clear that different religious leaders had differing understandings and expectations about the content of any potential “restoration” or “reformation.” In other words, they had different ideas about a sense of spiritual change and the modern. After the failed attempt to implement the Religious Bodies Law (*shūkyō dantai hōan*) in 1899-1900, the government sought the means by which to gain the support of religious groups for the creation of “national morality” (*kokumin dōtoku*) and “national enlightenment” (*kokumin kyōka*).<sup>50</sup> The plan by Tokonami Takejiro, within the Saionji Cabinet, sought to create this type of framework of three religions by which ideological goals of late Meiji government could be realized. Without a wide reaching body of law in place such as the Religious Bodies Law, the Home Office appealed directly to the religions (the Three Religions Conference is one such case) to display religious leadership in “the reality of society.”<sup>51</sup> The idea of the three religions united on behalf of the government in the “reality of society” implied that religious work occupied a sphere of society that government found hard to fully enter into.<sup>52</sup> Tokonami’s borrowing of Lloyd George’s speech in Cardiff reflected this idea. The spiritual authority of religion was to keep the nation vigilant until the societal ills of industrial modernity had been “transformed into happiness and hope.”<sup>53</sup>

Finally, the call for “spiritual restoration” as a means of completing the Meiji Restoration, functioned to add a revised unity of three religions to the idea of Japanese modernity. A former unity of Shintō, Confucianism and Buddhism, that had been ruptured in the act of the Restoration, was revised to include

Shintô, Buddhism and Christianity. However, the question of spirituality and faith within the public life of Meiji Japan continued to remain an open debate. What was certain was that Japan's sense of modernity, as had been experienced through the Restoration was critiqued as incomplete and in need of spiritual revision. For the government this meant greater participation by the religions in imperial society, while for religionists who were critical of governmental regulation, spiritual restoration meant the restoration of religious independence and the safeguarding of each religion's historical experience. The question that would remain open and never reach full resolution, even through the wartime period, was to what degree should a spiritual contribution by the religions be expected to aid in the maintenance of state policy and its objectives. Arguably, this question is still alive today in Japan's contemporary dialogue about a range of issues from Japan's memory of the war, to the teaching of patriotism and moral education in the public schools.

#### Notes

- 1 The full scope of the actual public debate surrounding the Three Religions Conference is too large in breadth for a paper of this size, and has already been examined in my doctoral work. McKenzie, Timothy S. "Spiritual Restoration and Religious Reinvention in Late Meiji Japan." Ph.D. diss. The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 2003. A draft of this paper was originally presented at The Seventh Annual Japan at Chicago Conference held at the University of Chicago in October 2008. The conference theme was "Buddhism and Japan's Modern."
- 2 The conference was attended by representatives of the thirteen recognized denominations of sectarian Shintô; fifty-one representatives of Buddhist sects and schools; and seven Christian representatives from Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. The conference was also attended by twenty-one governmental representatives including the military and the Ministry of Education. Though Christianity was still unrecognized by a governmental system of "approved religion" (*kôninkyô*), its inclusion by the government offered a kind of tacit approval. This also became a source of debate, as we will see below.
- 3 "Shûkyô riyô no keikaku," *Yorozu chôhô*, January 12, 1912, p. 2; cf., also "Naimujikan no shisô," *Tokyo mainichi shinbun*, January 16, 1912, p. 2, for another early version of the plan by Tokonami.
- 4 *ibid.*
- 5 See Maeda, Renzan. *Tokonami Takejirô den*. Tokyo: Tokonami Takejirô Denki Kankôkai, 1939 for a biographical discussion of Tokonami's life. In 1918, Tokonami was appointed Home Office Minister in the Hara Cabinet. He also served as the head of the *Seiyôkai*, as well as being elected several times to the House of Representatives.
- 6 Tokonami, Takejirô. *Ôbei shôkan* (Tokyo: Shiseidô Shoten, 1910), 1.
- 7 *ibid.*, 2-6.
- 8 *ibid.*, 15.
- 9 *ibid.*, 33.
- 10 *ibid.*, 15-16.
- 11 Tokonami, Takejirô, "Naimushô to shûkyô," *Asahi shinbun*, 19 January 1912, 4.
- 12 *ibid.*
- 13 Tokonami, Takejirô, "Kokumin no dôtoku oyobi shûkyô ni tsuite," *Shûkyôkai* 7, no. 6 (June 1911), 41. This criticism of state educational policy and the proposal for the three religions to actively engage in spiritual education of the nation put the Home Office in open conflict with the Ministry of Education. The most heated debate came in the National Diet when Home Office Minister Hara Takashi was questioned in both the House of Peers and the House of Representatives about Tokonami's proposed plan and its departure from previous governmental policy.
- 14 *ibid.*, 44.
- 15 Tokonami, *Ôbei shôkan*, 24-25.
- 16 *ibid.*, 30.
- 17 *ibid.*, 30-31.
- 18 Maeda, *Tokonami Takejirô den*, 245.
- 19 Tokonami, *Ôbei shôkan*, 32-33.
- 20 *ibid.*, 33-34.
- 21 "The Problem of Poverty, Mr. Lloyd George and the Churches," *Times*, 30 December 1911, 5.
- 22 *ibid.* The Japanese translation of the speech by Lloyd George can be found in Motoda, Sakunoshin, *Sankyô kaidô to kirisutokyô* (Tokyo: Torakuto Kankôkai, 1912), 58-71.
- 23 Though space does not permit examination of the public proposal published by Tokonami in the press, it can be found in the *Yorozu chôhô*, 18 January 1912 and the *Tokyo asahi shinbun*, 19 January 1912. Other newspapers that carried reports on the proposal were the *Miyako shinbun*; the *Tokyo nichichi shinbun*; the *Yomiuri shinbun*; the *Osaka mainichi shinbun* and the *Osaka asahi shinbun*. A notable number of journals also carried forums discussing the proposal: *Nippon oyobi nipponjin* No. 576 (February 1912), which carried articles by Tokonami, Anesaki Masaharu, Honda Yôitsu, Ôkuma Shigenobu, Senke Takatomi and Fukuhara Ryôjirô; further, a massive dis-

- cussion also appeared *Rikugo zasshi* 32/2 (March 1912); the journal *Chuô kôron* 27/3 (March 1912) also carried discussions about the plan and related issues.
- 24 Tokonami, Takejirô. *Chihô jichi oyobi shinkô saku* (Tokyo: Jitsugyô no Nipponsha), 4.
- 25 *ibid.*, 5.
- 26 *ibid.*, 235. I am indebted to James Ketelaar's, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan*, and his analysis of the separation of Shintô and Buddhism and the creation of modern Buddhism. I am also indebted to Murakami Senshō (1851-1928) and his analysis that the act of separation was a destruction of a unity of three religions, see: Murakami Senshō, Tsuji Zennosuke, and Washio Junkei, eds. *Meiji ishin shinbutsu bunri shiryô* (Tokyo: Tôhō Shoin, 1926-1929). It is my thesis that Tokonami sought to reclaim a unity of three religions that had been ruptured in the early Meiji period by his call for a religious conference that included Shintô, Buddhist and Christian leaders. Tokonami continued to advocate this vision of interreligious unity for the state into the 1920s and 1930s.
- 27 *ibid.*
- 28 *ibid.*, 238.
- 29 *Meiji ishin shinbutsu bunri shiryô*, 1: 27.
- 30 Tokonami, *Chihô jichi oyobi shinkô saku*, 236.
- 31 "*Shinbutsu kakudô oyobi kirisutokyô daihyôsha to uramen no shinsô (jô)*," *Chûgai nippô*, 16 January 1912, 2.
- 32 *ibid.*
- 33 *ibid.*
- 34 *ibid.*
- 35 "*Bukkyô kakushûha tôrosha kaigi*," *Chûgai nippô*, 27 January 1912, 3; "*Kaku shûha ni tsûchisu*," *Chûgai nippô*, 28 January, 1912, 2. The representatives were: Hirotsu Sessan (1862-1932) of the Sôtô sect; Sano Zenrei (1859-1912) of the Nichiren sect; Mochizuki Shinkô (1869-1948) of the Jôdô sect; Tomita Jojun (1875-1955) of the Hôzan school of the Shingi-Shingon sect; Miyamoto Ryûhan (1865-1920) of the Chizan school of the Shingi-Shingon sect; Juge Jishô (1852-1920) of the Tendai sect; Fujii Genei of Nishi Honganji (Jôdô shinshû); Andô Reigan (1870-1943) of Higashi Honganji (Jôdô shinshû); and Honda Nisshô (1867-1931) abbot of the Kenpon Hokke school of the Nichiren sect.
- 36 "*Bukkyô kakushûha tôrosha kaigi*," *Chûgai nippô*, 27 January 1912, 3.
- 37 *ibid.*
- 38 "*Ôtani-ha hantai riyû*," *Tsûzoku bukkyô shinbun*, no. 909 (6 March 1912), 15. For similar statements also see "*Ôtani-ha hantai riyû*," *Yorozu chôhō*, 26 February 1912, 2; and "*Higashi honganji kaidô kesseki riyû*," *Chûgai nippô*, 28 February 1912, 3.
- 39 This attack was mainly carried out in journals and newspapers, such as *Shinbukkyô*, *Taiyô*, *Rikugo zasshi*, and *Chûgai nippô*.
- 40 Tsuge Akiune, "*Kyôkai jihyô*," *Shinbukkyô* 13, no. 3 (March 1912), 302.
- 41 Tsuge, Akiune, "*Kanchô seido no haishi*," *Chûgai nippô*, 8 February 1912, 1. (Tsuge also argued that the abbot system was "poisonous" or "harmful" (*gaidoku*), ultimately harming the faith of Buddhist believers. See Tsuge Akiune, "*Kanchô seido no gaidoku*," *Chûgai nippô*, 18 February 1912, 1).
- 42 *ibid.*
- 43 *Bukkyô shugi kishakai no hantai undô*," *Chûgai nippô*, 6 February 1912, 2.
- 44 Uchimura, Kanzô, "*Kawarazaru kirisuto*," *Seisho no kenkyû*, no.148 (10 November 1912), 5. "*Nue*," literally "*nuezoku*," a mythical monster that had the head of an ape, the legs of a tiger, and the tail of a snake. For Uchimura, it signified not only a monster that was merely imaginary, but perhaps also a monstrous construction of religions which could never really have any existential ground for existence.
- 45 "*Kanchô wa menshoku ka*," *Chûgai nippô*, 29 February 1912, 2.
- 46 *ibid.*
- 47 Yokoi, Tokio. *Shûkyôjô no kakushin* (Tokyo: Keiseisha, 1893), 40-41. Yokoi was the eldest son of Tokugakwa period intellectual Yokoi Shônân (1809-1869). Yokoi Tokio also spoke at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 as a representative of the Japan Congregational Church (*Nippon kumiai kirisuto kyôkai*). He later served in the House of Representatives, and attended the Versailles Treaty Conference as a member of the Foreign Ministry.
- 48 *ibid.*, 45.
- 49 New Buddhist writers such as Tsuge Akiune, Takashima Beihô, Sakaino Kôyô, Ôsumi Shungaku; and Christian theologians, writers and politicians such as Kozaki Hiromichi, Ebina Danjô, Uchigasaki Sakusaburô, and Hinata Terutake, also made similar statements.
- 50 Ôkuma Shigenobu, writing in 1912, described this situation writing, "Essentially, we have laws for everything but religion." Ôkuma, Shigenobu, "*Haashite seian aruka*," *Nippon oyobi nipponjin*, no. 576 (February 1912), 131.
- 51 *Sankyô kaidô to tenrikyô*. edited by Dôyûsha henshûbu (Nara: Dôyûsha Henshûsbu, 1912), 16.
- 52 For example, work within hospitals, religious gatherings, private homes - what might be called *the everyday* - of Japanese life.
- 53 "The problem of poverty..." *Times*, 30 December 1911, 5.

## 明治末期における「近代」と「精神」について

ティモシー・マッケンジー

この論文は明治末期に行われた「三教会同」(1912)の論争の周りに現れた「近代」と「精神」という対照的なカテゴリーについて論じる。明治時代(1868-1912)は王政復古として始まったが、明治末期になって、政治家と宗教家たちによって、明治維新は未完成であるから、「第二維新」すなわち「精神上の維新」が必要だとの声が上がられた。本論文は政治家であって「第二維新」の必要性を唱えた床次竹二郎と、反対の声を上げた東本願寺派、新仏教運動の著述家たち、キリスト教の神学者であった内村鑑三のそれぞれの思想を比較考察する。

Key words : 三教会同, 明治維新, 宗教間対話, 新仏教, 床次竹二郎