

# **The Problem Of Buddhist Socialism in Japan**

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## (1)

The formation of Buddhist socialism in Japan made a belated start and its influence was little compared with that of Christian socialism in Europe, or even with the revolutionary movement (1851-1864) which occurred in the period of “idle peace” started by Hong Xiuquan (洪秀全) in China. The reason for the belated start seems to be indirectly concerned with national isolationism and the slow development of capitalism in Japan. The Communist Manifesto was published 20 years before the Meiji Restoration and the first volume of *Das Kapital* was issued a year before the Meiji Restoration. Directly, however, it was caused by the historical character of Japanese Buddhism.

### a. The State and Buddhism

Most Mahayana sutras in India are defensive of the state and since these sutras were imported to Japan and revered by Japanese dynasties, it is quite natural for Japanese Buddhism to have a strong tendency towards a tutelary character for the country. This character was weakened by neo-Buddhism which arose in the Kamakura period; but this neo-Buddhism also gradually became subject to the political power of the age. Buddhism in the Edo period was restricted and controlled by prohibitions concerning temples proclaimed by the Shogunate, and consequentially forced to co-operate with the Shogunate policy of banning Christianity. So it fell to the status of a home religion whose function was only to manage home events like funerals and memorial services which were strongly bound up with the idea of ancestor worship. It practically became a state religion as the result of combining itself with Shintoism. This fact led to much ungenerosity and hostility towards the internationalism and modernity of Christianity. Buddhism at the end of the Edo period and towards the beginning of the Meiji period hastened to become anti-Christian and anti-socialistic in order to defend itself against the annihilation movement of Buddhism started by Japanese classical scholars, Shintoists and the political power which was a great supporter of Japanese classical literature and Shintoism. As a result, Buddhism strengthened the yoke of nationalism and militarism under the Emperor system of the Meiji period.

### b. The Buddhist view of man and society

Buddhism expounded the problems of man and society with the thought of karmanic transmigration, and with the law of cause and effect throughout the so-called sanze— three temporal states of existence. This interpretation produced restrictions upon the idea of equality of the four castes. We human beings are equal only in the respect that we all possess the seeds of Buddhahood and therefore have the potentiality of realizing Buddhahood. The diversity of social positions, capabilities and circumstances was explained as the result of the inevitable consequences of merits and demerits in a previous existence. It is said that women possess five obstacles to overcome before they could attain Buddhahood because they were more sinful than men. Thus high and low, wealth and poverty, men and women, and happiness and unhappiness were deemed as differentiated in moral evaluation. True equality and justice means that we are differentiated and classified according to the law of cause and effect in the past, present, and future, so that the order of positions in society was metaphysically founded on this logic. This resulted in the philosophy of non-resistance and resignation which taught people to be satisfied with their present conditions and positions. Such Buddhist logic, combined with Confucian cosmology, excluded the idea of Providence, which became the pretext for dynastic change. Buddhist cosmology is

Pan-naturalistic which analogized the order and differentia of the natural world to be the best example. —On the contrary, the fact was that the order and differentia of the natural world was a reflection of that of human society. —In other words, Buddhist cosmology interpreted human society by the idea of natural laws which were quite protective of the order of the time, conceiving the present social order as a permanent one and rejecting socialism as an idea of perverted equality just like filling up a river with a mountain.

c. The doctrine of rewarding the good and punishing the wicked

The law of cause and effect, based on the idea of rewarding the good and punishing the wicked, appealed to the mind of personal utility and the said cosmology strengthened this idea. This idea appeared in the Constitution of 17 Articles proclaimed as a warning by Prince Shotoku which reads: “Imperial edicts shall be obeyed with self-denial. An Emperor is the heaven and subjects, the earth. — If the earth tries to screen the heaven, it shall be destroyed.” With this constitution, the path of Japanese Buddhism as a national religion was laid. Modern Japanese Buddhism, adopting the innate “submissive status” Confucian ethics, and with the authority of national morality passed down from above, (namely “The Imperial Edict on Education,” 1890) became an obedient servant of the Meiji government.

d. The problem of human rights and justice

All phenomena arise, according to Buddhist doctrine, from innumerable causes and conditions functioning mutually. Therefore, all phenomena are changeable, appearing and disappearing, and are unstable and unsubstantial which is, in Buddhist terms, called sunyata. Such a view of life and the world produced the doctrine of non-self and this doctrine made the independence of an individual personality impossible. This failed to accelerate the people’s interest for science. The doctrine of non-self did not produce principles which were equivalent with natural laws that are the very basis of modern human rights and justice. The main idea in the above mentioned 17 Article Constitution was directly connected with the idea of “sacrifice oneself for the public” in Fascism under the Emperor system. The public, in this case, meant, not the citizens, but the Emperor and the polity. The doctrine of non-self became nothing but the logic and ethics which served only Mikado Imperialism.

e. Absence of a dogma

Such a flexible philosophy of self intuition denied the conception of substance and supported the conception of relationships. Therefore, with the non-existence of a transcendental personified God, it failed to establish a fundamental dogma or theme which they should fight to protect and worship. This intuition-philosophy also made light of ideas and theories. As the way of religion which lays emphasis on inner lives of existential subjects, Buddhism established ethics of sentiment concerning the heart of a doer. It was a counterfeit of the doctrine of the law of cause and effect. Buddhist ethics emphasized the result of a behavior with responsibility.

f. The idea of obligation

With the idea of production by causation as a background, obligation was the core of Buddhist morals. However among the four obligations, — parents, king, sentient beings, and heaven and earth, or the three treasures: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha — the parental obligation was stressed and under the Japanese Patriarchal Theocracy, the idea of obligation switched over to the Emperor and was strongly emphasized so that the obligation towards sentient beings was almost ignored.

g. The logic of interdependence

In modern Japan, the logic of interdependence of all things came to be the same as the theory of the organic unity of the state. It turned out to be the logic of a part (individual) for the whole (state or society), while the logic of cooperationism in a big family system produced the ethics of the middle path or harmony which determined the relationship between capital and labor as a cooperative relation.

h. The principle of the middle path

The principles of Early Buddhism were embodied in the neutral social thought of modern Japanese Buddhism. This neutralism is neither middle thought between an ultra leftist thought and an ultra rightist thought, leftist adventurism and rightist opportunism nor that of Bernstein's modified socialism. It is ordinary eclecticism before such a confrontation. It is the art of living as enlightenment and mediation by common neutralism and social reformationism.

i. Convention of ancestor worship

The Buddhism that was developed in Japan as a religion for the protection of the country has been teaching the customs and morals of ancestor-worship, and gradually it united with the national morality of the big-family-system which emphasized the relationship between and emperor and subjects as father and children. Finally it fell in with a destiny which supported the holy war ethics based on the idea of "the eight corners of the world under one roof (universal brotherhood)."

j. The spirit of the aged

The doctrine of spiritual tranquility produced the wabi-and-sabi-culture after the middle ages. Its characteristic is not the verdure of youth but quietness and refinement of age. There is a slogan that says "Socialist party, grow up!" "Grow up" means, in this case, not to be critical and negative of the present situation, but to become affirmative and not to comment on the present situation. Quietness and refinement correspond to age. They mean calmness, moderation, honesty, and obedience. In other words, they are the very character of flexible compromise. The spirit of the aged teaches us not to dispute, not to want and to be generous.

k. The tranquility of mind rather than social justice

Buddhism does not concern itself with the existence of God, and therefore does not possess a principle of transcendence. The theory of sunyata did not conflict with National Shintoism because it is neither a prayer nor the determination to realize the justice of the Heavenly Kingdom. Its main purpose was to attain tranquility of mind so that it ignored the wish to reform the society.

## 1. The logic of “identity”

Freedom and spiritual tranquility are indivisible but psychologically they are the identity of two which contradict each other. Non-freedom is freedom. Freedom produces man’s political and social enthusiasm for the release of man. The basic idea of Buddhism is the logic of identity. Identity means “as it is.” It is the static, artistic and meditative view of the noble truth. It is not the logic of contradiction which is dynamic and realistic, but of elegance which is strictly interior and harmonious, therefore it did not become a foundation for Buddhist socialism.

## (2)

In spite of such historical conditions in Buddhism, the quickening of Buddhist socialism began to slowly take place. The movement for the release of man was pushed forward mainly by Christians or under the influence of Christianity. We have learned now that it would be to cast away freedom of religion if Buddhism ever became anti-Christian, and that it was to sell its honor to militarism under the Emperor system if it became anti-socialistic. During that period, however, a few conscientious Buddhists began to show an interest in social ethics based on Buddhism and also Buddhist socialism under the influence of Christians and socialists. The “Oriental Socialist Party,” which was said to be the origin of the socialist movement, was established by Tokichi Tarui (1864-1924) in 1882 (Meiji 15) and it is noteworthy that the equality of Buddhism was mentioned in its main principles. This society was broken up and Tarui was arrested. The outstanding character who attacked this organization “inequality” was that very noted scholar of Zen Buddhism, Tanzan Hara (1873-1924).

The suppression of Buddhism in the drive to found National Shintoism criticized apostate priests and petrified Buddhism. Reflections on such a status brought about renovation movements in Buddhism. The Spiritual Movement was represented by Manshi Kiyozawa (1863-1903) of the True Pure Land Sect (1863-1903) whose base was kokodo (1863-1903). This spirituality emphasized independence of the Buddha-dharma from the Royal-dharma, spiritualism against materialism. Its view of social life was the organic unity of the state. However, in spite of its morality that rejected killing, as did all Buddhism, and hoped for harmony of all people, some of the coteries supported the war and Kiyozawa’s social thought changed in the course of time. He commented that Buddhism implied a kind of socialism or national socialism, and he insisted on the policy of social ethics by the state. But his view of social life was “discrimination is equality,” therefore it prescribed socialism as perverted equality and denounced Shusui Kotoku (1871-1911) and his anarchist members. It is noteworthy, however, that Kiyozawa read “Das Kapital” in translation about 1892 (Meiji24).

There was another neo-Buddhist movement called the Buddhist Puritan Association started by Koyo Sakaino (1871-1911) and Beiho Takashima (1871-1911) in 1900. The members of this association were more active than those of spiritualism. They tried to foster sound knowledge and morals based on faith in Buddha and were willing to have frank discussions with Christians and other religious people. Moreover, they rejected the protection and interference in religion by the authorities. Some of them associated with The Commoner – a paper for the common people – issued by Kotoku and Toshihiko Sakai (1871-1911), but their proper function was social reformation through just guidance and enlightenment of the people. Kokei Hayashi (1871-1911) advocated for pacifism and showed socialistic tendencies.

Again Shoshin Ito (伊藤 宗新), who was not quite a socialist but renounced the True Pure Land Sect, established “the Selfless Institution” and started the selfless love movement. Kotoku, Sakai, Gudo Uchiyama (宇治山 梧多), Roka Tokutomi (徳島 徳久), and Ryosen Tsunajima (津島 呂生) expressed their approval for this effort. Ito criticized materialism and imperialism, and advocated pacifism. He also emphasized the release of all people from social limitations and had conversations with socialists. He strictly condemned the so-called “High Treason Case” caused by Shusui Kotoku and his staff members in 1910, nevertheless he admired their courage risking their lives for the sake of socialism.

\*Annotation: Later on, Shoshin Ito became a fervent supporter of World War II, and after the war he disapproved of the theory of class struggle.

Hajime Kawakami (川崎 肇), the future scholar of Marxism, entered the Selfless Institute but left after two months because of the conflict between Ito’s deep religious attitude and Kawakami’s historical attitude which was then becoming completed within him. Kawakami, however, drew an exact line between a religion and a religious truth in the manner of distinction between a religion and the religious which appeared in John Dewey’s *A Common Faith* written in 1934. Further he commented that the former was an opium for the people but the latter was a subjective truth which transcended history. He stressed the possibility of co-existence of the two – scientific socialism and religious truths which were a different plane and field. (“The Redundants in Prison” 1947) Daisetsu Suzuki (鈴木 大石) said in his “Neo-Essay on Religion” written in 1896 that religion wishes to straighten out social complications with freedom as the sword and with equality as the shield but never approves of radical socialism such as anarchism. Right after World War II, Suzuki signed his name to “The Declaration of Japanese Scientists for Peace and War” which was socialistic. Again he said “I think religion must be like an an-archism. Anarchism is not self indulgence. It is individual freedom without interfering with others. – If we all understand this, and if everything works out right, it is anarchism, I believe.” (“The Lectures on Contemporary Religion” vol. 6 Sobun-Sha, 1955) When all is said and done, Suzuki’s idea was to realize an anarchistic world through religious enlightenment.

A Zen priest Gudo Uchiyama of the Soto sect who was involved in the High Treason Case advocated anarchy, pacifism and complete disarmament based on the Buddha’s teachings of equality and peace. He also issued secret papers which persuaded recruits to desert from military bases. Kotoku became interested in Zen through the influence of Uchiyama. Kenmyo Takagi (高木 謙明 1864~1910), a priest of the True Pure Land Sect was also involved in the High Treason Case and hung himself in prison. He was a superior of a Buddhist temple at a discriminated village in Aichi prefecture. He desired the abolition of licensed prostitution and war and the release of all mankind so that he became acquainted with the Kotoku group. He stuck to his principles as a Buddhist socialist. He only believed in Tathagata and refused to respect the Emperor. Set-sudo Mineo (尾藤 静雪 1885~1910), a Zen priest of the Rinzaï Sect, began to have a growing concern about the anti-war arguments around the period of the Russo-Japanese War (1904~1905). He was deeply impressed by the books written by Isoo Abe (阿部 磯雄), a Christian socialist, and came to believe that religion must be like socialism. He was acquainted with Kotoku and Seinosuke Oishi (大石 新助), and played an active part but later departed from the social movement and died in jail.

Seiga Mori (森 清我), a Buddhist priest of the Shingon Sect, and Shuten Inoue (井上 shuten), a Zen priest of the Soto Sect were thoroughly investigated in the High Treason Case. Mori joined the Neo-Buddhist Movement founded by Sakaino and had communication with socialists, especially with Naoe Kinoshita (木下 直生) and Sakai. He took an active part in investigating “The Ashio Copper

Poisoning Case.” He also joined in the Purification campaign. He was no socialist but opposed social evils and political abuses saying that true religion was resistance, not non-resistance. Inoue was a pacifist on the basis of the principle of Buddhist non-resistance and criticized the education of loyalty and patriotism because it would conflict with Buddhist equality. Furthermore, he advocated internationalism. Again Mankichi Saiko (西園寺) of the True Pure Land Sect was influenced by Sakai, Hitoshi Yamakawa (山岡), Manabu Sano (山野) and Sakae Osugi (尾崎). He led the campaign for the release of discriminated people and later organized the “Suhei-sha” in 1922 in the name of religious humanism and devoted himself to the campaign with progressive Buddhist priests.

The High Treason Case was a serious and extensive shock to the Buddhist world. Due to this shock, the Buddhist world became morbid, morbid enough to drive out the principle of blind-equality as an irreconcilable, traitorous idea and to show a hostile feeling openly to pacifism which had a close connection with the principle of blind equality. In other words they zealously discharged their duties under the Emperor system.

The Rising Youth Buddhist Union must be noticed here because it was typical of Buddhist socialism. This Union was organized in 1931 (Showa 6) with Yoshiro Senoo (西園寺 1888-1961), a Buddhist priest of the Nichiren Sect, as chairman and Shojun Mibu (三木) of the Tendai Sect and Reiho Hayashi (林) of the True Pure Land Sect, as members of the central executive committee. The main principles they mentioned were the following:

- We admire and respect Buddha Sakyamuni as the highest truth and expect to realize the establishment of Buddha’s world, conforming to the principles of brotherly love.
- We judge that all established religious bodies are nothing but profane ruins of the Buddhist spirit, therefore we ignore them and do our best to enhance the Buddhism of a new age.
- We have decided that the existing economics organization based on materialism is contrary to the Buddhist spirit and does not benefit the people. So we wish to form a Buddha’s world on this earth.

This Union had its headquarters in Tokyo and set up nearly 20 branch offices with over 2,000 committee members at its command. “The Campaign for Truth” was formed by Entai Tomamatsu (東太), Kakusho Takagami (高上), Bunyu Masutani (三谷) and Koson Ebe (江部) in 1930. This campaign stressed the cooperation of capital and labor and rejected class struggle. The Rising Youth Buddhist Union strongly criticized the above campaign because of its ideological character. The R.Y.B.U. stated the following four articles for methodology of revolution.

1. It is desirable that the R.Y.B.U. should take the initiative but this is impossible at the present stage so that what we are to do is to give positive aid to the proletarian organization with Buddhist purification.
2. What is meant by Buddhist purification is, theoretically, to let the spirit of oneness of matter and mind reflect upon materialism and practically, to approve of terrorist revolution as an exception and then get the movement to be personalized.
3. The theory which affirms the terrorist revolution in Buddhism is derived from the teaching “kill one and let many survive.”



4. As for the prospects of revolution, a Buddha's world cannot be established immediately after the success of the socialist revolution so that we must admit an autocracy by the proletariat but we shall do our best to speed up the establishment of a Buddha's world.

Chairman Senoo was arrested when backing the Tokyo Municipal Streetcar Strike in 1934 (Showa 9) and arrested again in 1936. In 1937, 25 leading members were prosecuted by the Law for Maintenance of the Public Peace and then the R.Y.B.U. was disorganized. At that time, the number of members was about 500. Senoo was converted and left prison. "Mr. Senoo was sentenced to 3 years' penal servitude in the appeal deliberation. He was about to appeal to the Supreme Court but finally decided not to, because he feared that he might give us some trouble. He was sent to Kosuge Prison. Later I heard that he said he had been pleased that both Hayashi and Mibu had been given a suspended sentence, and that at least he had to serve time. (from "Being a victim for the Law of Maintenance of the Public Peace" by Shojun Mibu in "the Testimony of Living Religionists of the Present Age," New Japan Publishing Company)

After Japan surrendered to the Allied Powers, the said union restarted with a new name "The Buddhist Socialism Union" by Senoo, Mibu and Noriatsu Nakano (XXXX) of the Nichiren Sect but before long this union was disbanded due to external and internal reasons, but the members of this union participated in the Anti-War Peace Movement with other progressive Buddhists. Senoo became a head official of the secretariat of the National Conference for Peace established in 1951. He fell sick from overwork and closed his bitter life on the 4th of August, 1961 at the Shiroyama sanitarium, Matsumoto city.

What I want to mention here is the record, "The Establishment of the Rising Youth Buddhist Union and its Principles" written in 1937 (Showa 12) by Senoo, who was under arrest and was forced to write it by the Investigation and Prosecution Bureau. But so far as I can see, this is quite logical and the standard of thinking is much higher than that of the R.Y.B.U.. The essentials of the record are as follows: (cf. "The Fighting Rising Youth Buddhist Union" in Contemporary Thoughts and the Standpoint of Buddhism" by Reiho Hayashi)

1. The doctrine of production by causation of Buddhism teaches us the truth that nothing belongs to us. Therefore, in the reality of life, this is to deny the private ownership system of capitalism.
2. The Emperor system forms a key link in the chain of capitalism which is the basic cause of distress of the present age in Japan. The power system is strengthening to exploit and oppress making use of the Emperor's prestige.
3. Buddha's world is a brotherly world without classes, exploitation, and a state. In a social-istic society, production and distribution must be co-managed by people according to the fundamental principles of this world.
4. We have to fight together with the people of the propertyless class for the release of man and we must not neglect to try to purify the very process of the fighting as Buddhistically as possible.

Reiho Hayashi emphasized in the above mentioned books that the above record was fabricated by the investigation and prosecution bureau against Senoo's will and he went on to produce

evidence. Mibu also declared in the said essays that the R.Y.B.U. never had the idea of denying the Emperor system. I myself believe that it is possible that Senoo was made aware of his real intention which was unknown even to himself and logically composed in the process of thorough and logical pursuit of the concerned bureau. Be this true or not, we must admit that the R.Y.B.U. was an epoch making result in the history of Buddhist socialism.

In conclusion, I would like to mention the Nichiren-Sho Sect; namely Soka-Gakkai and its political wing - The Komei Party. This party is a new religious group which was organized after World War II. This party stands for the harmony of the Buddha dharma and the Royal dharma (politics) based on the law of cause and effect and on the idea of merits and punishments which appears in the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra; and also on the writings of Saint Nichiren who intended them to be a support for Japan, giving warnings to the state and enlightening people, and also on "The Theory of Value" by the originator Jozaburo Makiguchi (西郷 1871~1944). It is a political religion under the slogan of "The Third Civilization," "Neo-Socialism" and "Internationalism" grounded on the philosophy of non-duality of soul and material. Consequently Soka Gakkai is critical of old National Shintoism. Soka Gakkai is, as regards religion, a fetishism. They worship the board mandala and the chairman. They also stick to the doctrine of specified sutras and scriptures; therefore, its main characteristic is a way of thinking which admires power. It requires no hard training but promises worldly profits. And as for social thought, it is a social reformationism which tries to establish a welfare state under the present system without taking any notice of the structural contradiction of the capitalistic way of production and circulation system which consider man power as a merchandise. There obviously exists a contradiction between Buddha dharma (Soka Gakkai) that stresses punishment to believers in evil sects - those who do not believe in the Nichiren Sho Sect - and the Royal dharma (Komei party) which promises the realization of the greatest happiness for the greatest number. It is nothing but conventionalism which intends to manage any and all oppositions and contradictions, case by case with the spell "Open Sesame!" of the Middle Path. This political religion or religious political party will change itself within the mentioned limit, along with the changes of major or minor situations.

### (3)

If there ever is a necessity and possibility to form a Buddhist socialism in Japan, its test will be whether it can succeed to the Buddhist tradition creatively in such a direction and quality; it is to give, at the very place of sunya and from the very place of sunya, a new and fresh meaning and significance to the principle, spirit and standpoint of dharma which means truth, reason and justice in contemporary circumstances. In this case, the attitude of "non-abiding nirvana" of Bodhisattva-hood will be a good suggestion.

\*Annotation:

Non-abiding nirvana - Muju-nehnen or Mujosho-nehnen, the fourth of the four kinds of nirvana, Nirvana with no fixed abode. A person who has attained awareness of the principle that there is no distinction between the realms of nirvana and transmigration does not elect to dwell in tranquility but actively works in the worlds of transmigration for the benefit of all sentient beings.

However, it shows the fact that, after all, it is the path of minor selected Buddhists and this severe restriction can not be gotten rid of as long as it requires the complete enlightenment of Buddhists as a vital precondition. We must at first bear in mind that here lies a very difficult

problem. (Please refer to my book “Zen and Contemporary Thought” published by Tokuma Book Store.)

1. The doctrine of production by causation and the idea of sunya have a function to deny absolute isms, theories and principles including the teachings of the Buddha. Understanding that Buddhism is only one of many religions, Buddhist socialism will penetrate into history and form a flexible system which grows and breaks from convention through mutual criticism and study of other religions, theories and isms. It means that it must overcome the first principle of the R.Y.B.U. “we admire and respect Buddha Sakyamuni as the highest truth...” in the religion and philosophy of sunya. Here is the spirit of one of the four great vows of Bodhisattva-hood, “however limitless the dharmas are, I vow to study them.”
2. The theory of production by causation does not merely approve of independent and fixed phenomena of the world. It applies to nationality and humanity. In other words, this theory denies them as independent and fixed. If someone says Indians are cunning and American soldiers are cruel, it seeks for the conditions in the historical world under which they are made so. As to such views as Rousseau’s, Lao Tsze and Zhuangzhi’s that the development of science and technics will make man estranged, depraved, and unhappy, this theory not determines man and civilization by a historical view of food and natural features which defines man as an eating being but also seeks the direction of development for science and technics giving consideration to a specific society; that is a national system. Science and technics do not improve automatically, - the words “improvement of science and technics” comprise within themselves the absence of man’s subject - but they will develop in a designed direction by man’s choice through man’s subject, that is through scientists and technicians.
3. The doctrine of production by causation brings up the matter of contingency, but on the other hand, it suggests that if necessary conditions for growth and existence of a certain phenomena are missing, that phenomenon will not be produced or if it already has been produced, it will be changed and extinguished. Therefore it is said, “without a contributory cause, not a thing will be produced.” On the contrary, this gives us a suggestion that this doctrine teaches us the necessity and possibility of historical practice which makes the subjective and objective conditions for the production of a certain phenomenon.
4. The doctrine of production by causation also teaches us that we are being kept alive by the favor and sacrifice of man and nature in cosmic history. We must be ashamed of possessing any material or spiritual fortunes, because any and all fortunes belong to the people and the spirit of the three worlds (“sanze” - three temporal states of existence) and there is nothing that is self-possessed. However, this teaching, judging from the view point of the present age, will become a moral lecture, if it tries to criticize the capitalist private ownership system by the knowledge and principle of “non-attainment.” We must understand two facts: one is that Marx accepted the historical merits of the capitalist way of production. The other is that in order to elucidate scientifically the structures of the capitalist system, which has a fundamental contradiction, and its rule on development, he liquidated his philosophical conscience. Here lies the vices of the Buddhist-ethical-socialism of the R.Y.B.U., except for the philosophy of “oneness of matter and mind” and the simple theory of “kill one and let many survive.”

We will be able to get, in connection with the doctrine of production by causation, the dialectic operation and connection between optimism and pessimism in history to the point where the horizontal axis of production by causation in our actual life cross each other dynamically. Further, we will examine the reason why and how bureaucratism, increase of state power and the illusions of major countries occur in the socialistic countries whose principle is scientific socialism.

5. The logic of production by causation in Mahayana Buddhism and the logic of “identity” are inseparably related to each other. The logic of identity is the logic of “identity and difference” which implies the meaning of negation. In the past, Buddhism understood the logic of identity and difference merely as the logic of a mental state that is static, aesthetic and meditative. But now it must investigate and prove itself that it is also a logic of dynamics which has the power to reform history.
6. There are at least two noteworthy points in the idea of transmigration of all sentient beings: one is the fact that it became the background or foundation of harmony and peace in India, China, and Japan. Here is the poem written by Gyoki (西行), a Buddhist priest of the Nara era:

Hearing guinea fowls singing,  
How I wonder whether it be my father or  
Mother.

This poem expresses vividly the intimate and realistic feeling towards grass, trees, insects and nature. Those insects could have been our own ancestors and we may be born birds and animals in the next world.

Having had a bath,  
Now, where shall I throw the water?  
I dare not frighten these chirping insects.  
During the daytime, I found out that  
There is a tiny red belt  
Around the neck of a firefly.  
Come and play with me,  
Oh! poor orphan sparrows!

We lean that the ethics and philosophy of non-taking of life, antiviolence, harmony and peace have a metaphysical and realistic base. The other is that it has a part justifying irrational and unrighteous matter, and at the same time, not to immediately deny man’s desire for social justice, but to affirm it within the belief and thoughts that the law of cause and effect will be strictly realized. The doctrine of transmigration is merely an assumption and a requirement, and it is impossible to inspect beyond the limit of our recognition. The problem for us is to incorporate the positive and current significance of the idea of the Buddhist three worlds. And the target of Buddhist socialism is to try to establish a society where no Buddhist charity is needed.

7. The idea that “all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature innately” is the religious foundation of the principles; the equality of man, the dignity of individuals and respect for life. This idea suggests, on the other hand, the emperor and the people are equal as unenlightened men alienated from the Buddha-nature. Furthermore, this idea criticizes the man-centric-thought in the sense that only man has the image of God. There is the idea “plants and earth can become Buddhas, because all beings, sentient and non-sentient, have the Buddha-nature.” Buddhist naturalism, which emphasizes the original oneness of man and nature, is charged with the mission to warn and protest, based on the metaphysical foundation against self-alienation from nature caused by science and industry, also against the unbalance of man and nature due to destruction of nature under political system of our age. Here we have a chance to speak of the Green International against the Red International.

(Conclusion)

If Buddhist socialism ever has a chance to exist, its structure will be Sunya-Anarchist-Communism. Sunya, in this case, is the foundation of a social revolution on a vertical plane. It is also the foundation of a humble and flexible spirit which has purified dogmatism, self-absolutism and the revolutionary will of power on the stage of fundamental choice. It is the basis of wisdom to prevent it from becoming narrow-minded Buddhist socialism. Buddhist socialism is anarchism because the purification of will-power is connected with the horizontal plane and finally will deny state-power. As for economics, it is communism because through the liquidation of philosophical conscience, it rejects the capitalistic system of private ownership and destroys the social foundation of the bartering of the labor force by the knowledge and practice of social science. If we replace sunya with the word freedom, it is the freedom of the vertical plane; namely of man-existence. And anarchist-communism is concerned with the freedom of the horizontal plane. If the intersection of vertical freedom and horizontal freedom be called an “origin,” the Sunya-Anarchist-Communism is, as long as the man-subject is concerned, in origin humanism. This is to realize the complete return and release of the relationship between estranged man and man, estranged man and nature. This original humanism will try to discover the significance of living as man, devoted to create a contrary oneness of tranquility and untranquility within constant, individual or collective practice in actuality, in the dialectical process of theory and practice. “After all, is it not the way of the enlightened, not of the unenlightened?” See “Zen and Contemporary Thought” published by Tokuma Book Store.

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The Problem Of Buddhist Socialism in Japan  
1970

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