

Buddhist Republican Thought and Institutions in Japan: Preliminary Considerations

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Large Buddhist monasteries in premodern Japan were governed on the basis of “republican” and quasi-democratic principles (open discussions of policy matters held at public assemblies, decisions made through free and individual voting, elective appointments, etc.). This important feature has been generally dismissed or neglected as scholars have chosen instead to emphasize the activities of so-called “soldier monks” (sōhei 僧兵). In this paper I discuss the governance of large monasteries with its “democratic” orientation and some of their ramifications within society at large. I also trace the origins of the Japanese developments of this peculiarly Buddhist political discourse to the Vinaya and the early Buddhist Sangha in India; further back, its fundamental principles derived from the government systems typical of so-called “tribal republics” during the age of Śākyamuni. Among these republics, the most influential was the Vṛji (Pāli Vajji) confederation dominated by the Licchavi tribe, but the Śākya clan was also known for its “republican” institutions. (Indeed, “saṅgha” is the specific term used in ancient Indian political discourse to refer to such institutions.) As a heuristic strategy, I refer to Indian historians’ reconstruction of the social and political context of the early Buddhist Sangha in northeastern India around the time of the Buddha. By looking at Japanese Buddhist political discourses and institutions through an Indian lens, I hope to shed new light on premodern Japanese Buddhism. In particular, I argue that one of the peculiarities of what Kuroda Toshio 黒田俊雄 defined as kenmitsu 顕密 Buddhism was its republican and quasi-democratic nature, which sets it apart from the other centers of influence (kenmon 権門) that characterize the medieval Japanese polity; the original republican and democratic orientation of early Buddhism was preserved, in altered forms, in various aspects of political praxis in pre-modern Japan (and, in some cases, even in present-day Japan).

Monastic Governance: A Medieval Buddhist Democracy?

The *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 presents a memorable scene dated to 1177 in which the clergy of Mt. Hiei 比叡山 monastic complex gather in a meeting to discuss the demotion and punishment of the Tendai 天台 head abbot, Myōun 明雲

(or Meiun, 1115-1184), as decided by Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa 後白河 (1127-1192).



Fig. 1. Clergy assembly on Mt. Hiei: from *Heike monogatari emaki*, vol. 2, p. 16.

After a heated debate, the clergy voted (with a sort of individual ballot system) and chose to reject the demotion and to take measures against the court's decision. Eventually, they rescued Myōun on his way to exile.¹

This was not the only case in which the clergy gathered to discuss an issue and decided to vote and adopt the view of the majority of voters; on the contrary, this political practice, far from being peculiar to Enryakuji 延暦寺, in fact constituted the fundamental system of governance of large monastic institutions in medieval Japan. Precisely because this scene was not an isolated exception, but an example of a general rule, there are a number of elements that concur in making it truly

This paper is a summary of a much longer manuscript I have prepared as part of a larger project on the impact of Indian culture on premodern Japan. Here I will limit myself to some preliminary considerations on the basis of mostly secondary literature. I wish to thank in particular Franco Cassano, since it was owing to a discussion with him that I came upon the idea to start this project; and Satō Hiroo and Iyanaga Nobumi for their advice and support. James Baskind's suggestions have much improved the text. A shorter version of this text has been published in Japanese, translated by Iyanaga Nobumi, as Rambelli 2008.

¹ *Heike monogatari*, vol. 1 (NKBT 32), pp. 141-148; McCullough 1988, p. 59-61; *Heike monogatari emaki*, vol. 2, p. 16.

memorable. First of all, the entire clergy, not just the aristocratic monks entrusted with the administration of the temples, gathered and voted on an important issue. Secondly, the vote of each member of the clergy had the same weight, no matter the actual monastic and social ranking of the voter. This practice strikes us as being very close to a democratic decision making process. Thirdly, when the assembly chose to reject the decision of the highest authority in the country, Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, the clergy showed a strong awareness of the autonomy of its monastic institution, rather than with larger concerns about the state. Finally, and more generally, this constitutes a kind of political praxis and system of governance that, because of its “democratic” orientation, was radically different from those adopted by the other “centers of influence” (*kenmon*) at the time.

Large monasteries in Kyoto, Nara, and in other major regional centers in medieval Japan were complex institutions. The clergy (*shuto* 衆徒 or *daishu* 大衆, “multitude”) was hierarchically structured with many internal subdivisions. At the top there were the scholar monks (variously known as *gakushō* 學生 or 学匠 and *gakuryō* 学侶). Below them there was a large body of professional figures, collectively called *dōshu* 堂衆 or *gyōnin* 行人. On Mt. Kōya 高野山, a third group was also officially recognized, that of *hijiri* 聖 or itinerant religious specialists. Scholar monks were the leaders of their temples, but important decisions were usually made at assemblies of all monks residing at the temple. Since worker monks were overwhelmingly more numerous, the decisions of scholar monks were often rejected, an outcome that at times resulted in violent outbursts.

A general organizational and administrative structure coexisted with a de facto subdivision in several semi-autonomous and semi-private entities, such as *ji* 寺 (temple halls), *in* 院 and *bō* 坊 (monastic residences). Among the latter, *monzeki* 門跡 and monastic residences belonging to aristocratic monks were governed according to rules based on court protocols; in other subtemples, controlled by monks with a warrior family background, feudal conventions were the dominant administrative principles. However, as a corporate and autonomous entity, the temple as a whole functioned according to a very different logic, one that involved equality of all members (as opposed to social hierarchies), open discussion of common issues (as opposed to the authoritarian rule of the court and the *bakufu*), and individual voting rights.

Assemblies were held on all levels: hierarchical categories (senior scholar monks, workers, etc.), temple residences, larger subdivisions including several temple halls, and the entire temple complex (including members from the *monzeki* clergy). Such

general assemblies were known as *Kondōmae sengi* 金堂前僉議 (general assembly in front of the Golden Hall) at Kōfukuji 興福寺 and *santō sengi* 三塔僉議 (general assembly of the three pagodas) on Mt. Hiei. Most decisions within the temples were made by the general assembly after an open discussion in which consensus was sought; the spirit of unanimity was emphasized, but when unanimity could not be achieved, the decision of the majority (ascertained through free voting) was binding for all. As medieval sources tell us, in the public discussion consent and disagreement were expressed by the formulae, respectively, *mottomo* 尤 (“that’s right!”) and *iwarenashi* 謂れなし (“that’s unreasonable!”).



Fig. 2. Clergy meeting at Enryakuji; the participants manifest their consent by uttering the expression *mottomo* (“that’s right!”). From *Tenguzōshi*, pp. 38-39.

A document from Jingoji 神護寺 dated 1185, known as “Mongaku kishōmon 文覚起請文” and including forty-five articles on temple life and regulations, lists the issues that are the subjects of public discussion and decision by the clergy: “[appointment of] senior positions and the performance of important rituals at the temple, carrying out the two paths of religious practices and learning, rules concerning novices, administration of subsidiary temples and land holdings, procedures concerning good and bad things related to profane and religious matters, should be discussed and deliberated (*hyōjō rihi* 評定理非) unanimously by the general temple assembly (*manzan ichimi dōshin* 満山一味同心).”²

In general, there was a distinction between “committees,” with specific and limited competences, and the general assembly of the clergy entrusted with the highest decisional authority. All meetings were regulated by numerous and detailed procedures. Most temples had a regular meeting day (*shikijitsu* 式日). In addition to the general assembly, each subtemple had regulations concerning its own meetings.

² HI vol. 9, n. 4892, “Mongaku kishōmon.”

There were rules to follow to convene a meeting (monks were to be informed of the date, time, place, and subject of a meeting), rules concerning participation (most detailed at Tōdaiji 東大寺 and on Mt. Kōya); procedures to be followed in case of absence (the absentee had to turn in a valid justification); penalties for unauthorized absence (similar to those observed in the case of absence at official ceremonies or *hōe* 法会). The minimum legal number for each assembly was decided, as well as who was entitled to participation. When unanimity could not be reached, majority vote (*tabun no hō* 多分の法) was enforced. In any case, unanimity was often an agreement in which one opinion prevailed over other proposals. Therefore, it was the result of compromise and, at times, of the majority vote. In this process senior monks and leading figures could exercise significant influence. Several voting systems (*gatten* 合点) were used. When the assembly had to decide between two positions, a sheet of paper was divided into two parts, with one position written on top of each part; the participants would draw (in principle, anonymously, since they did not write their names) a short line in the part of the sheet with the opinion they agreed with. In case of election to specific posts, the names of the candidates were written on a sheet of paper and the participants would draw a line under (or to one side of) the name of their candidate.

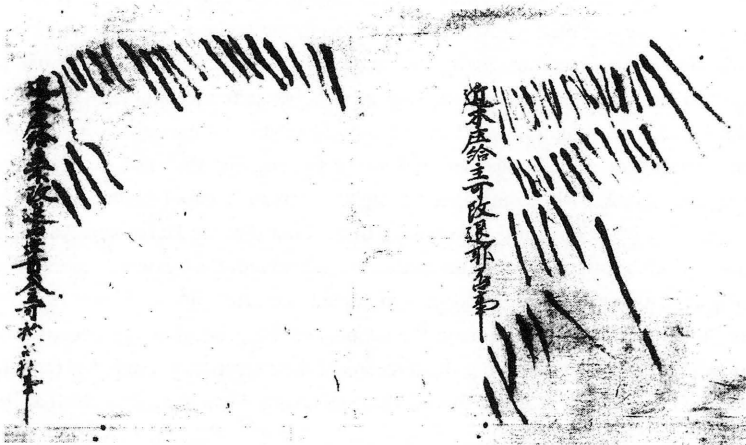


Fig. 3. Voting sheet from Mt. Kōya; the lines represent individuals agreeing with either of the two motions on discussion. From Seita 1995, p. 158.

This kind of decision-making process based on assemblies and voting was established in Japan rather early. Several sources from the Nara period refer to majority decisions made by monastic assemblies; however, Enryakuji is the largest temple from which the oldest records concerning assembly deliberations on important matters remain, some of them dating to the mid-Heian period. These procedures may have constituted the basis for medieval assembly institutions in other temples as well.³

The temples' form of governance was the result of several factors that can be generally ascribed to the process of feudalization of religious institutions. As largely autonomous feudal agencies, temples needed to develop self-governing institutions virtually independent of the state. The temples' sense of independence can be gathered from the famous saying attributed to Retired Emperor Shirakawa 白川 (1053-1129) lamenting matters beyond his control: "The flow of the Kamo River, the role of the dice, and the mountain clerics [*yamahosshi* 山法師] are things I cannot control,"⁴ but also from ideas such as the "Yamashina dōri 山科道理," which is a set of fundamental principles based on a kind of sacred righteousness originating from unanimity that animated the activities of the temples and the actions of their clergy.

The state, represented by the emperor, was still nominally in charge of supervising the religious institutions, but in practice the emperor—or, at times, the retired emperor—limited himself to appointing to the highest religious ranks those monks who had been nominated by the temples themselves. (The role of the bakufu, at least in the Kamakura period, was limited to police activities and legal arbitration in disputes between temples.) When the appointees did not encounter the approval of the clergy, they were impeached and forced to resign by the monastic assembly.⁵ Aristocratic monks, who controlled the highest-ranking positions, were considered the main link between court and temples throughout the late Heian and Kamakura periods. Their growing power constituted the introduction of external hierarchical principles within the temples and thus disrupted centuries-old traditions. However, many noble monks failed to obtain the support of the general clergy because they were perceived as not protecting the interests of their temples enough. On the other hand, their supporters at court forced them to resign when they thought that they

³ Seita 1995, pp. 15-16, 18.

⁴ *Heike monogatari*, vol. 1 (NKBT 32), p. 93; McCullough 1988, p. 50.

⁵ For some examples of the Enryakuji and Kōfukuji clergy rejecting aristocratic appointees and forcing them to resign, see Adolphson 2000, respectively pp. 113, 137, 140-149.

had been too close to the temple's interest, rather than to the court's.⁶ Gradually, the low-ranking monks, also thanks to their larger numbers, took control of the major temples' decision-making processes by dominating the general assemblies. The political influence of the clergy assembly may also be a reaction of the low ranking clergy against the increasing power exercised within the temples by aristocratic monks.⁷ Even that being so, the fact that the general assemblies were not only not forbidden, but that they acquired a growing importance, is remarkable.

The ideological assumptions and the procedures in many present-day Japanese assembly meetings (*kaigi* 会議) derive from the Buddhist practice in which all the clergy gathered to discuss and deliberate about a specific issue.⁸ The Vinaya describes in detail the various procedures related to monastic assembly in the *Konmahō* 羯摩法 or *Konmasahō* 羯摩作法 (Sk. *Śaṅghakamma*). The Indian historian Sukumar Dutt has stressed the importance of *Śaṅghakamma* ("transactions of a Sangha") as "the act of an entire corporate body performed in accordance with set rules and forms of procedures,"⁹ or, in other words, "any transaction which related to the Sangha in its collective or corporate life was called a *Śaṅghakamma*."¹⁰ As Dutt explained, "A *Śaṅghakamma* was hedged in by constitutional rules, the meticulous observance of which settled the validity of the act or transaction."¹¹

The *Konmahō* can be divided into three main sections: the first, *shinnenhō* 心念法, deals with the ways to perform the rite of repentance (*zange* 懺悔); the second, *taishuhō* 対首法, deals with the ways to perform a repentance in front of two or three monks; and the third, *shusōhō* 衆僧法 (or *shuhō* 衆法) deals more specifically with the procedures related to holding an official assembly. In particular, a decision was made based on a majority vote (variously called *taningo bini* 多人語毘尼 or *tanin binaya* 多人毘奈耶, literally, "majority rule") in those cases in which it was difficult to achieve a unanimous consensus on some issue. When the ideal unanimity within the Sangha was broken and a contrast between two different opinions could not be solved in a compromise agreement, the head of the assembly decided whether a case should be put to vote (*salākagāha*, "vote"). The Vinaya listed ten such cases. They generally concern lack of agreement, potentially

⁶ Adolphson 2000, pp. 142; 263-264.

⁷ Seita 1995, p. 18.

⁸ Ibid., 1995, p. 11.

⁹ Dutt 1962, p. 87.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1996, p. 120.

¹¹ Ibid., 1996, pp. 120-121. For a list of the most important *Śaṅghakamma*, see Ibid., p. 122.

disruptive opinions, and unclear doctrinal issues; but the assembly should not be asked to vote on minor issues, on clearly wrong or mistaken doctrines, and when in bad faith.¹² The vote was carried out by using bamboo sticks or wood sticks called *salākā* (Jp. *chū* 籌); they were either cut into two different sizes (short and long) or painted with two different colors, one for each opinion in the discussion to be voted for.¹³ If there were problems with the issues to be debated, a committee was formed and the matter was left to its deliberations, which were then accepted by the general assembly.

Voting was carried out according to complex and scrupulous procedures also in medieval Japanese temples; one could say that monastic assemblies in medieval Japan shared the same ideal principles of the early Buddhist Saṅgha. Voting was in fact a peculiarity of the Buddhist clergy as a “supramundane” (*shusseken* 出世間) organization which followed rules distinct from those of the “mundane,” profane society (*seken* 世間).¹⁴

The Buddhist Saṅgha and Ancient Indian Republics

The form of democratic governance that characterizes medieval Japanese Buddhist institutions did not originate in Japan. It has a long history that can be traced back ultimately to the early Buddhist Saṅgha in ancient India. However, most Japanese studies of the Vinaya narrowly understand it as disciplinary rules for monks and nuns and tend to downplay or even ignore the political ideals upon which Buddhist monastic institutions were originally built and their subsequent transformations.¹⁵ Indian historians, in contrast, have chosen to investigate in depth the political ideals that animated the Buddhist Saṅgha in ancient India. It is an accepted notion among Indian scholars that early Buddhist monastic institutions were based on the political principles and practices of the ancient tribal republics (known as *saṅgha* or *gaṇa-saṅgha* in Sanskrit) in north-eastern India at the time of the Buddha—the political and social environment in which Śākyamuni himself was born and raised.¹⁶ The first to point to the existence of nine republican polities in

¹² See *Gobunritsu*, p. 154c.

¹³ On the uses of these voting sticks in Buddhism, see Durt 1979. It may not be irrelevant for the present discussion to note that a variant of this system is still in use at the Japanese Diet (parliament) during anonymous vote.

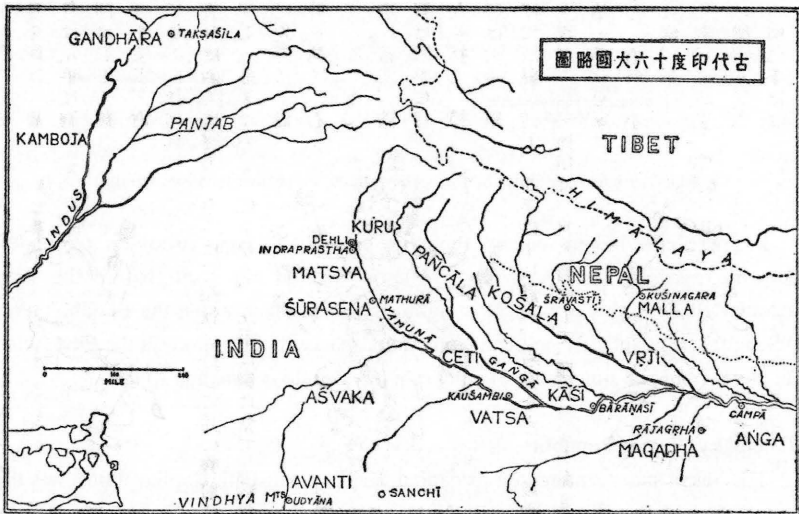
¹⁴ Seita 1995, pp. 13-14.

¹⁵ See in particular Ishida 1986.

¹⁶ Sukumar Dutt emphasizes that the Buddha “set up [the Vajjis’] tribal life as the model for the Bhikkhu-saṅgha’s own group-life”: Dutt 1962, p. 86. Romila Thapar writes that the “procedures for the functioning of the Buddhist Saṅgha are thought to be based on those followed in the

northeast India at the time of the Buddha was T.W. Rhys-Davids in 1903.¹⁷ Since his pioneering work, several scholars, mostly from India, have studied the issue in depth through the analysis of written documents and archeological evidence through which a much clearer and more accurate picture has emerged.

Among the numerous polities mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures, Vṛji and Malla were republics at the time of the Buddha. In particular, the Vṛji (Pāli: Vajji) confederacy included eight allied tribal entities, namely, the Licchavis, the Videhas, the Vṛjis proper, the Jñātrikas, the Ugras, the Bhogas, the Aikṣvākas, and the Kauravas. Among them, the Videha tribe was centered at Mithilā (usually identified today with the town of Janakapura in Nepal); the Licchavis had established their capital city at Vaiśālī (near the modern village of Besārḥ, Muzaffarpur district, state of Bihar in India). The Vṛji confederacy was a powerful state, rivaling with the kingdom of Magadha for control of the Ganges River and other trade routes.



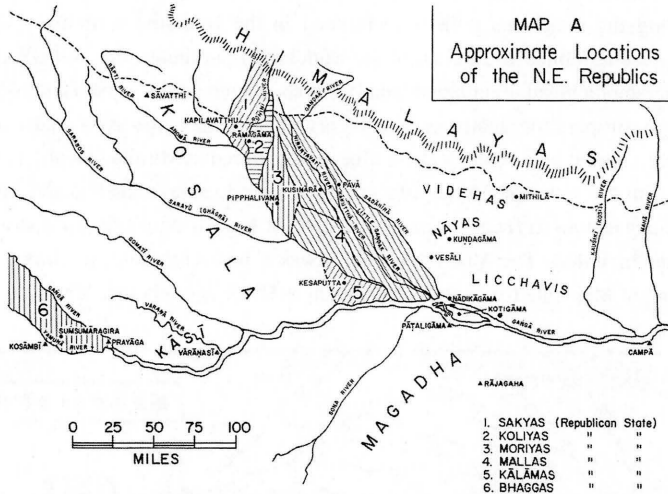
Map 1. Major Indian polities at the time of the Buddha. From MBD, vol. 3, p. 2418.

In addition, at the time of the Buddha there existed in northeastern India also a

gaṇa-sanghas"; in particular, "the administration of the Licchavis was looked upon with admiration by the Buddha": Thapar 1984, p. 81. According to Sharma, "The Mahāparinibbāna Sutta pays an eloquent tribute to the merits of the Vajjian political institutions": Sharma 1968, 132. See also, among others, Nakamura 1991, pp. 185-192.

¹⁷ See Rhys-Davids 1903, pp. 17-41.

number of minor tribal republics, including the Nāyas, the Śākyas, the Koliyas, the Moriyas, and others. The Śākya state, where the Buddha was born, was one such republican organization.



Map 2. Ancient republics in northeastern India. From Sharma 1968, left of p. 1.

In post-Vedic Indian sources, republics were called *gaṇa* (troop or multitude), *saṅgha* (assembly), or *gaṇa-saṅgha*—terms that do not occur before the sixth century BCE. In this respect, it is significant to emphasize that the Buddhist term “Saṅgha” had explicitly political connotations since its inception. In the East Asian context, *gaṇa* and *saṅgha* are in practice equivalent to *daishu* and *shuto*.

The Śākya Tribal Republic

The Śākya state, centered on its capital, Kapilavastu (Pāli: Kapilavasthu), was the tribal organization in which the Buddha was born. According to Sharma, the Śākyas may by then have become part of the kingdom of Kośala, but they preserved a degree of self-autonomy.¹⁸ Rhys-Davids has shown, based on the Pāli canon, that the Śākyas had “a single chief, ... elected as office holder, presiding over the Senate, and, if no Senate were in session, over the state. He bore the title of *Rāja* which in this connection does not mean king, but rather something like the Roman consul, or

¹⁸ Sharma 1968, p. 184.

the Greek archon.”¹⁹ The governing assembly of the tribe was the Śākya-gaṇa, chaired by a person who had been chosen by the members.²⁰ In many early Buddhist sources, there is no mention of any individual royal authority, but the chiefs of the Śākyas are all called kings.²¹ In this aspect also, they conformed to the political tradition of other republican clans. Thus, the East Asian tradition, according to which the Buddha was the son of king Śuddhodana, is based on a misunderstanding of the political situation of the Śākya state; Śuddhodana was most likely the president of the senate (and, thus, of the state).²² Buddhist sources report that the Śākyas were utterly defeated and massacred by the king of Kosala Virūḍhaka (P. Viḍūḍabha, Jp. Ruri-ō 瑠璃王), the wicked son and successor of Prasenajit (P. Pasenadi, Jp. Hashinoku-ō 波斯匿王). After the defeat, the Śākyas disappeared from historical records.

Vṛji and Licchavi

The Licchavi were the most important members of the Vṛji Confederacy. At the time of the Buddha they rivaled the power of Magadha and their capital, Vaiśālī, was one of the largest, most beautiful and most famous cities in India. Mahāvīra, the founder of the Jaina religion, was born not far from Vaiśālī, where Śākyamuni visited often. Many references to this city and its splendor, as well as to the Licchavi and their form of government, can be found in the Buddhist and Jaina literatures. There appear to be some problems with the names Licchavi and Vṛji, often used interchangeably by scholars, but the common understanding now is that Vṛji was the name of both the confederacy and one of its tribal members, whereas Licchavi was the name of its most important tribal organization.²³ This interpretation is based in part on Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664) who, in his account of his travels in India, distinguishes between the state of Vaiśālī (Ch. Feisheli 吠舍釐, that is, the Licchavi, Ch. Lichepo 栗帖婆, polity) and the Vṛji (Ch. Fulishi 弗栗恃);²⁴ he also mentions that “the northerners” called the latter polity “the country of Saṃvṛji” (Ch. Sandaishiguo 三代恃國, probably a mistake for Sanfashiguo 三伐恃國 or Sanfachiguo 三伐持國), literally “the united Vṛji”—that is, the Vajji Confederacy.²⁵

The Vṛji Confederacy and the Licchavi’s city-state of Vaiśālī within it were the

¹⁹ Rhys-Davids 1903, p. 19.

²⁰ Sharma 1968, p. 195.

²¹ See references in Sharma 1968, p. 189.

²² On the Śākya clan as a tribal lineage, see also Thapar 1984, p. 147.

²³ On this point, see for instance Sharma 1968, p. 95.

²⁴ Xuanzang, T p. 909a-b; English trans. p. 214.

²⁵ Xuanzang, T p. 909c-910a (the variant renderings are on p. 910a, note 1); English trans. p. 217.

most developed *gaṇa-saṅgha* at the time of the Buddha. These oligarchic republics “can perhaps be more precisely described by the terms chiefships or chiefdoms”;²⁶ they were characterized by a quasi-democratic form of government based on direct participation. Political rights were shared by all adult male members of the tribe, normally of *kṣatriya* caste, who bear the title of *rājā*.²⁷ Thus, the class of people endowed with governing rights in the Licchavi republic was quite numerous, possibly a few thousand men—a figure that is comparable with the ruling class of classical Athens and perhaps larger than that in republican Rome.²⁸ All the *rājās* had equal status, but there were distinctions based on age.²⁹ These *rājās* participated in the general assembly of the state, which was invested with supreme power. The assembly elected from among themselves a president and an executive council entrusted with carrying out the actual administration of the state, but always in consultation with the collective body of *rājās*. Buddhist texts suggest that the executive power was in the hands of a king/president, a viceroy, a general-in-chief, and a treasurer. Jaina texts, in contrast, indicate that a council of nine members, chaired by what could be called the president of the Licchavi republic, carried out the administration and were responsible to the Assembly.³⁰ The decisions of the executive council were thus binding on the entire population. These policies lay a strong emphasis on government by consensus, and all decisions had to be taken after discussions and deliberations by the general assembly of the *rājās*; in particular, decisions were made by voting. As Sharma notes, the *rājās* entrusted with the administration of the state “derived their power, not from an individual, human or divine, above them, but from the qualified multitude, below.”³¹ It is true that this was not a perfect kind of direct democracy, as women and serfs—which, taken together, constituted the largest part of the population of these state formations—were not part of the decision-making process. Still, this form of government was radically different from classical Indian kingship, in which the

²⁶ Thapar 1984, pp. 78-79.

²⁷ In fact, the use of the term *rājā* for the members of the ruling clans is a peculiar aspect of these organizations. In addition to the Licchavi *rājās* and their families, in the territory of the republic there were Brahmins, artisans and craftspeople (perhaps not members of the Licchavi tribe); agriculture might have been carried out by serfs: Sharma 1968, p. 100; Thapar 1984, pp. 104-108. It appears that none of these classes enjoyed political rights, as they were not Licchavi *kṣatriya*.

²⁸ See Sharma 1968, pp. 99-100.

²⁹ Thapar 1984, pp. 78-79.

³⁰ For specific references, see Sharma 1968, p. 105-106 (None of these works were known to the pre-modern Japanese). It is likely that, by the time these texts were written, the memory of this ancient republican form of government had probably been lost and its modalities were described in puzzling statements.

³¹ Sharma 1968, pp. 12-13.

ruler was either deified or believed to partake in some way of the essence of the gods. Sharma called it a “government by discussion.”³²

Buddhist and Jaina sources, not included in the East Asian canon, report that a few years after the death of the Buddha, the king of Magadha Ajataśātru attacked the Vṛji confederacy and reported an overwhelming victory.³³ This war may have marked the end of the Vṛji confederacy and also the beginning of the decline of the Licchavi. Both are mentioned for the last time in the seventh century by the Chinese monk Xuanzang, who described the dilapidated state of their land and cities.³⁴ At that time, it appears that the Licchavi had already begun moving north toward Nepal, where they established a dynasty that ruled the country from the fourth century or earlier until the end of the eighth century; in this connection, Xuanzang mentions the Nepali King Aṃśuvarman.³⁵ The disappearance of republican states has been attributed to the inherent weakness of their political system: a lengthy decision-making process, the need to build consensus, and the risk of discord among the ruling elites, which would have stopped the government.³⁶ Romila Thapar explains their disappearance as an outcome of the process of transformation of tribal political organizations based on lineage into more complex state formations.³⁷

The Vṛji Confederacy and Buddhism

Indian historians have suggested that Śākyamuni (at least, as he is presented in the scriptures) had a strong sympathy for the Vṛji confederacy and especially the Licchavi, their most influential tribe. More specifically, authors have suggested that the detailed and complex procedures related to assemblies in the Buddhist Sangha, presented in the Vinaya texts—out of which, as we have seen, administrative procedures in Japanese monastic institutions developed, were based on analogous procedures of the Vṛji confederacy and the Licchavi republic. The sermon on collective prosperity (literally, Aparihāniyā Dhammā, “principles of non regression from the right path,” Jp. *futaitenhō* 不退転法 or *futai* 不退) is particularly important in this respect.

In it, the Buddha openly extolled the virtues of the Vṛji’s republican institutions

³² Sharma 1968, pp. 12-13. This expression is borrowed from J.A.O. Larsen, who applies it to the ancient Greek and Roman republican polities.

³³ Sharma 1968, pp. 126-127.

³⁴ Xuanzang describes Vaiśālī on pp. 908a-909c (Li 1996, pp. 209-217) and the Vṛji state on p. 910a-b (Li 1996, pp. 217-219).

³⁵ Xuanzang, p. 910b; Li 1996, p. 220.

³⁶ See for instance Sharma 1968, pp. 240-241.

³⁷ See Thapar 1984.

and social conventions, emphasizing that these virtues would protect the state against attacks by foreign enemies. Significantly, the Buddha also recommended that after his own death his followers emulate the social principles of the Vṛji. In detail, the seven principles are as follows.³⁸ (i) They gather in large numbers and hold frequent assemblies to discuss matters of state policy and carry out together the administration of their country; in those assemblies they strive for unanimity and avoid discord. (ii) Within their society, rulers and subjects live in harmony, and upper and lower members of society respect each other. (iii) They respect Dharma and perform their numerous rituals in the prescribed way; they keep to the old laws, do not change what has been decided and do not establish new customs. (iv) They have strong family ties and protect their women; elders and young cooperate. (v) They are filial and respect their parents and their teachers. (vi) Their ancestral temple (*caitya*) is always well decorated; there, they worship frequently the deities of their land. (vii) They hold religious virtue in high esteem, and give with generosity food, drink, clothes, medicines, and shelter to the Buddhist *śrāmanas* and other itinerant ascetics.

The overall image conveyed by the scriptures is that of a society emphasizing consensus and harmony based on public and extensive discussion; attributing great importance to established procedures and protocols (rules and rituals) as a way to frame potentially divisive arguments and thus avoid fragmentation; and endowed with a strong sense of collective identity, as indicated by the worship of their tutelary deity. However, harmonious relations within the community were an essential factor in such a political structure, and discord would have been difficult to control.

The Licchavi in Japan

In the East Asian Buddhist canon, the Vṛji and especially the Licchavi have an evanescent and ambiguous status. For example, there is no unified transcription for their names. It takes a considerable knowledge and the collation of several sources to realize that Butsurishi 佛栗氏 (Ch. Folizhi), Hotsuriji 弗栗恃 (Ch. Fulishi) and Sanbatsujikoku (Ch. Sanfashiguo 三伐特國 or Sanfachiguo 三伐持國) referred to one and the same territorial unit as Batsugi 跋祇 (Ch. Bazhi), Batsuji 跋耆 (Ch. Bazhi) and Otsugi 越祇 (Ch. Huozhi), that is, the Vajji/Vṛji. A similar problem arises with the word Licchavi, variously rendered, among others, as Risha 離車 and Reishahai 隸車輩.

³⁸ Based on the accounts in: *Chō Agonkyō*, pp. 11a-b; *Binaya zōji*, pp. 382b-383b; *Butsu han naion kyō*, p. 160c; *Chū Agonkyō*, pp. 648a-649a; *Dai hatsu nehanyō*, p. 193c.

Nevertheless, it is quite surprising to see how many references to Licchavi people and more generally to Vaiśālī can be found throughout the history of Japanese culture. For instance, some representations of the Buddha's nirvana include, among the mourners, the representative of the city of Vaiśālī (*Bisharijō chōja daijin* 毘舍離城長者大臣, probably a reference to the Licchavi tribe's chief minister or president-elect). In the *Nehanzu* 涅槃図, dated 1086, preserved at Kongōbuji 金剛峰寺 on Mt. Kōya, Wakayama prefecture, and designated as National Treasure, the Licchavi representative can be seen on the far right of the image, to the right of Buddha's feet, wearing a characteristic headgear.



Fig. 4. The chief minister of Vaiśālī; detail from the *Nehanzu* in Kongōbuji, Mt. Kōya. From Nakano 1988, p. 2.

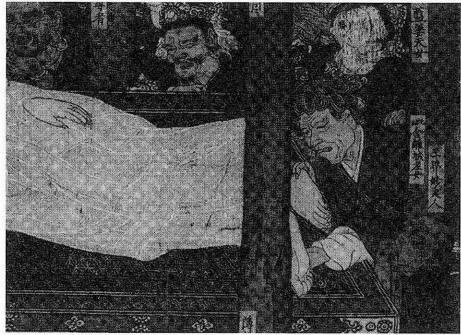


Fig. 5. The old woman from Vaiśālī, detail from the *Nehanzu* in Kōshōji, Kyoto. From Nakano 1988, p. 31.

A different variant of the painting of Buddha's nirvana, exemplified by the *Nehanzu* and dated 1451 from Kōshōji 興聖寺, Kyoto, shows an "old woman from the city of Vaiśālī" (*Bisharijō rōjo* 毘舍離城老女) touching the Buddha's feet.

These two images were the prototypes for countless visual representations preserved and displayed at temples throughout Japan, especially in occasion of the ceremony celebrating the nirvana of the Buddha (*nehan-e* 涅槃会).

The city of Vaiśālī and an important Licchavi householder, named Master Gakkai (*Gakkai chōja* 月蓋長者), are also at the origin of the famed Amida 阿弥陀 icon of Zenkōji 善光寺 temple in Nagano, according to the story told in the *Zenkōji engi*

善光寺縁起.³⁹ Furthermore, in the Edo period a fictional member of the Licchavi oligarchy, named Prince Entarō (Entarō Taishi 縁太郎太子), ruler of Vaiśālī, was even believed to be the ancestor of groups of *kawaramono* 河原者 and *eta* 穢多, people allocated to the bottom of the social hierarchy because of their alleged impurity.⁴⁰

The most famous Licchavi is by far the wealthy merchant Vimalakīrti, the protagonist of the sutra bearing the same name.⁴¹ He is both the ideal Buddhist lay practitioner and an effective representation of Mahayana's doctrine of nondualism. The *Vimalakīrti Sutra* presents at least two significant peculiarities: it is the only scripture in which a lay person preaches the ultimate Dharma to other Buddhas and bodhisattvas with the tacit approval of Śākyamuni; it also documents a free discussion, in which each participant explains his opinion on a certain subject, before a final agreement is attained—a setting that was likely based on the Licchavi traditional assembly procedures and policymaking.⁴² In Japan, the *Vimalakīrti Sutra* was one of the first scriptures to be spread and commented upon as seen in the commentary attributed to Shōtoku Taishi 聖徳太子, the *Yuimagyō gisho* 維摩經義疏; a stunning early image of Vimalakīrti can be found in the Pagoda of Hōryūji 法隆寺. Traditionally associated with the figure of Vimalakīrti is also the founder of the Fujiwara 藤原 clan, Kamatari 鎌足 (614-669), who is credited with the establishment of the *Yuima-e* 維摩会 ceremony, and also contributed to the diffusion of its cult.⁴³ In a number of pre-modern pictorial representations associated with the Tōnomine 多武峰 temple-shrine complex that serves as Kamatari's mausoleum, we find a triad composed of the Buddha Śākyamuni, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, and Vimalakīrti overlooking another triad made up by Kamatari and his sons Fuhito 不比等 and Jōe 浄慧—in which the former constitute the *honjibutsu* 本地仏 (original sacred entities) and the latter their earthly manifestations (*suijaku* 垂迹). Since the Muromachi period, and especially in the Edo period, another image of Vimalakīrti spread to Japan in connection with the diffusion of Zen 禅 Buddhism and a new emphasis on lay practices.⁴⁴

³⁹ On this narrative, see McCallum 1994.

⁴⁰ See Morita 1978, pp. 22-25.

⁴¹ See *Yuimagyō*; English tr. *Vimalakīrti Sutra*.

⁴² These peculiarities can be understood as further proof of the deep affinity between Indian Buddhism and the Licchavi.

⁴³ From the beginning of the tenth century, the *Yuima-e* held annually at the Kōfukuji around the middle of the tenth month, acquired a double nature as an official lecture on the *Vimalakīrti Sutra* and a memorial rite for Kamatari.

⁴⁴ For a more detailed discussion, see Kuroda 2007, esp. pp. 291-344.



Fig. 6. Image of Vimalakīrti by Jōkei 定慶 at Kōfukuji, Tōkondō



Fig. 7. Vimalakīrti and Kamatari (Tokyo National Museum)

Knowledge in Japan of the figure of Vimalakīrti and the imagery associated with it were also spread by literature and the arts. The collection of essays entitled *Hōjōki* 方丈記, written in 1212 by Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明 (1153-1216) is inspired by the spirit of seclusion from worldly matters that animated the lay Buddhist practitioner Vimalakīrti, and this inspiration is clear already from the title.⁴⁵ The *hōjō* 方丈, a square room of approximately twelve square meters (four and half *tatami* 畳 mats), is in fact the simple room in which Vimalakīrti lays in bed ill and where he receives the visit from various buddhas and bodhisattvas—the basic setting of the *Vimalakīrti Sutra*. This architectural unit was emphasized by the Zen tradition in Japan and later became a setting for the tea ceremony (*cha no yu* 茶の湯); many Japanese houses and apartments still have a four-and-a-half-mat *tatami* room.

Buddhist Law (*Buppō* 仏法) as an Alternative Political Discourse

According to received understanding, the “Buddhist Law” is a *religious* concept referring to the modalities of Buddhist institutions as *religious* establishments; it thus belongs to a different conceptual order than its counterpart, the “Imperial Law,” which refers instead to the modality of secular power based on the authority of the emperor. Kuroda Toshio should be credited for emphasizing that *buppō*, at least in the *ōbō* 王法-*buppō* pair, referred to “Buddhism as a social entity, that is, to

⁴⁵ See NKBT vol.30, P. 45.

the actual power of religious institutions.”⁴⁶ We should remember that *ōbō* is not only a concept taken from ancient Chinese political thought (it appears, among others, in the *Shi ji* 史記 [Book of History] and *Han shu* 漢書 [History of the Han Dynasty]); it is also a literal translation of the Sanskrit *rājādharma*, “the duty of the king,” that is, the way in which a king should act.

As Balkrishna Gokhale wrote, “early Buddhists betray feelings of disquiet, bordering on fear, about the nature and functions of kingship.”⁴⁷ This “disquiet” was due essentially to the violence and arbitrariness intrinsic to the institution of kingship. It is perhaps significant in this respect that the Buddhist traditional list of the five biggest disasters consists of fire, earthquakes, thunders, floods, and robbers and kings together.⁴⁸ Early Buddhist texts describe a fundamental distinction between *artha* (the realm of political economy and government) and *dharma* (the moral, religious path of Buddhism), and stressed the superiority of the latter. It is perhaps not by chance that the Buddha decided not to follow his father’s steps and become a ruler himself, but chose instead to live as a renunciant ascetic. However, the Buddhist communities could not survive without protection from secular authorities, and it became necessary to formulate guidelines to orient secular political activity informed by Buddhist ideas of society and morality. In any case, the Saṅgha was characterized by ethical and social dimensions that were radically different from those of contemporary kingdoms.

Sukumar Dutt has emphasized that ancient Buddhist monastic institutions in India were characterized by “several features of ‘democracy,’ ancient and modern”; namely, “the system of joint deliberation, the postulation of equality of all members in decision-making on matters of common concerns, the rule of majority, the rejection of personal dictation.”⁴⁹ Dutt also stressed the “strictly ‘republican’ character” of the Buddhist Saṅgha “precluding all personal control or dictatorial interference.”⁵⁰ Indeed, the Buddha strongly rejected the very idea that the Saṅgha needed an individual leader and designated no successor after his extinction.⁵¹ Subsequently, no supreme leader was ever appointed and “the Saṅgha governed

⁴⁶ Kuroda 1980, pp. 45-46

⁴⁷ Gokhale 1966, p. 15.

⁴⁸ See Nakamura 1975, p. 93.

⁴⁹ Dutt 1962, p. 87.

⁵⁰ Dutt 1962, p. 177.

⁵¹ In one of his very last sermons, as reported by the pre-Mahayana *Nirvana Sutra*, the Buddha argues that the Saṅgha is not dependent upon his own or anyone else’s leadership, but should instead take decisions collectively based on the teachings and the precepts; see *Chō Agonkyō*, pp. 17c-18a.

itself as a completely republican institution.”⁵²

This oscillation between an earlier republican, tribal ideal and more concrete social determinations that imposed on the Saṅgha a coming to terms with contemporary monarchies is implicitly described in the Buddhist origin myth of kingship. According to the myth, the first king was elected by the people for the sole purpose of preserving the social order, which had degenerated after a Golden Age because of human ignorance, greed, and anger. In the myth, kingship is just a means to preserve social order against violent degenerations caused by the lack of enlightenment, and cannot by itself provide a durable solution to such a fundamental problem.⁵³ Thus, early Buddhist political thought lacks the idea of divine kingship—a significant difference with respect to classical Indian political thought (*Book of Manu*, *Arthaśāstra*, *Mahābhārata*, etc.).⁵⁴ This myth of an elected king (the Mahāsammata) might reflect the early Buddhist nostalgia for the political organization of the ancient tribal republics of north-central India, in one of which Śuddhodana, the Buddha's father, held the office of elected ruler.⁵⁵ Later Buddhist authors tried to bring the realm of secular politics within the larger sphere of Buddhism. This operation required the creation of a new model of kingship, the Dharma-king (Sk. *dharmarāja*, Jp. *hōō* 法王), i.e., the king as an upholder of Buddhist Dharma, often represented by the figure of the *cakravartin* (*tenrinshōō* 轉輪聖王). This is the basic template of what became known, in early medieval Japan, as the interrelation between the king's duties (Sk. *rājadharmā*, Jp. *ōbō*) and Buddhism (*buppō*).

Kuroda Toshio proposed a radical revision of received understanding of the medieval Japanese political spectrum by positing the existence of three centers of political power (*kenmon*): the court, the bakufu, and the religious institutions centered on the large temples in the Kyoto-Nara region (*kenmitsu* Buddhism). Many scholars have been hesitant to recognize such a role for the temple-shrine complexes, and some have rejected Kuroda's interpretation outright. I would argue that *kenmitsu* Buddhist institutions did not constitute a cohesive political block and did not aim at ruling the entire country (differently from the court and the bakufu),

⁵² Dutt 1996, p. 116; on this point, see also Nakamura 1991, pp. 201–203.

⁵³ The Mahāsammata myth is presented, among other texts, in the *Kise inbonkyō*. The political implications of this myth (democratic election of the ruler) is criticized by Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293–1354) in his *Jinnōshōtōki*, p. 48.

⁵⁴ The idea of *cakravartin*, the Buddhist answer to Hindu sacred kingship, appears to be a later development as an attempt to present a political model based on Buddhist ethics; see Rambelli 2007.

⁵⁵ See Sharma 1968.

but had nevertheless a considerable autonomy, power, and influence on large sectors of society. Most significantly, they functioned according to a political system that was radically different from those adopted by the court and the *bafuku*; this was an important feature that they shared and that set them apart from other contemporary institutions. Following the Indian historians who have studied the subject in depth, it is possible to define the political system of Kenmitsu Buddhism as essentially “republican” and quasi-democratic in nature.

Romila Thapar has written: “The organization of the *saṅgha* borrowed its form from the *gaṇa-saṅgha* system and led the *saṅgha* to see itself as a contrast to monarchy and insisted on a separate identity.”⁵⁶ However, “The egalitarian society of the *saṅgha* was possible only when the state system came into being and monastic institutions could be maintained.”⁵⁷ A very similar situation also occurred in Japan. The Buddhist institutions’ support of the *rājadharmā* (*ōbō*) in Japan was dictated not so much by an awareness of their mutual intrinsic affinity, but was rather an attempt to secure, in exchange, the political and economic autonomy of Buddhist institutions. This compromise resulted in the production of an alternative political discourse emphasizing ideal king figures such as the *dharmarāja* and the *cakravartin*, and in the development of a complex ritual apparatus for the protection of the state, in which Buddhism mobilized its lofty political ideas and tried to superimpose them on actual political imagery.⁵⁸ This led to a kind of organic collaboration, if not mutual dependence, between Buddhist institutions and the state (known as *buppō ōbō ryōrinron* 仏法王法兩輪論, lit. “monarchic institutions and Buddhist institutions are like the two wheels of a car”).

However, *kenmitsu* Buddhism never rejected the non-monarchical principles upon which its own institutions were based. In this respect, at least, *buppō* is radically different from *ōbō*. Many monks were clearly aware of this radical difference. A document issued by the general assembly of the three pagodas on Mt. Hiei, dated 1368, includes the following statement: “Among the three jewels, *Saṅgha* means harmonious multitude. [It is constituted by people who] rejecting hierarchies, titles, and ideas of loftiness and lowliness that characterize the profane world, by their own will become renunciants and thus enter the egalitarian sea of the Buddha.”⁵⁹ Statements like this confirm what Romila Thapar has written: “The *saṅgha* excludes stratified caste society and tries to recapture the pristine, egalitarian

⁵⁶ Thapar 1984, p. 148.

⁵⁷ Thapar 1984, p. 150.

⁵⁸ See Rambelli 2007; Rambelli 2002-2003.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Tsuji 1970, p. 327.

society.”⁶⁰ It was not a complete egalitarian organization, of course, but it was organized according to autonomous and internal rules, that were, at least in principle, based upon seniority of service to the Buddha-Dharma and intellectual and organizational capacities. The previously mentioned document from Mt. Hiei explains internal hierarchy by referring to the *Bonmōkyō* 梵網經: “those who have taken the precepts earlier sit in front, those who have taken the precepts later sit in the back.”⁶¹

In Japan, the *kenmitsu* temples’ gradual loss of power and influence during the Muromachi period also brought about an ossification of their form of governance; by the Edo period, monastic assemblies were purely formalistic institutions that limited themselves to rubber-stamp policies decided elsewhere.⁶² This decline of democratic practices within the Buddhist realm should not blind us to the fact that they spread outside of the strictly monastic realm and had a lasting effect on Japanese society at large. Given the high degree of permeability existing between the Saṅgha and the secular society in premodern Japan, it is hard to conceive that this political discourse remained confined to the monasteries. Traces of the influence of Buddhist republican and quasi-democratic political discourses can be found for instance in the arena of premodern public discussions and policy-making represented by village self-governing bodies (*sō-hyakushō no yoriai* 惣百姓の寄り合い, *miyaza* 宮座, etc.) and the organization of revolts (*ikki* 一揆). Villages had their own procedures for decision-making and forms of self-government based on public meetings and more or less open discussion; their emphasis on voting and unanimity closely resembles the political language of Buddhist institutions.⁶³

Conclusion

The tribal council of the ancient Indian republics “served as exemplar for the Bhikkhu-saṅgha where its republican note was reproduced.”⁶⁴ It is certainly surprising to consider that several aspects of collective decision making processes in Japan, such as the emphasis on consensus-building and unanimity, the importance of holding formal and informal meetings, not to mention the significant detail of the present-day method of anonymous voting at the Diet using colored tablets, may all be derived from the practices typical of medieval Buddhist institutions, which were

⁶⁰ Thapar 1984, p. 151.

⁶¹ Quoted in Tsuji 1970, p. 327.

⁶² Seita 1995, pp. 19-20.

⁶³ On this subject, see Katsumata 1982.

⁶⁴ Dutt 1962, p. 86.

in turn based on the governance of ancient Indian republics.

Nevertheless, most authors, with a few notable exceptions, have generally ignored or downplayed the political and cultural significance of medieval Buddhist government. For instance, Kuroda Toshio noted that the practice of holding assemblies to discuss and deliberate about important policy matters independently of the social status and religious ranking of the participants, at a time in which decision-making was exclusively in the hands of people endowed with authority, “deserves attention,”⁶⁵ but he did not elaborate on the ideological originality and social impact of this form of government. Seita Yoshihide 清田義英 praises the medieval temples’ administration based on detailed and precise procedures and principles (*dōri* 道理), voting, and consensus reached at through public debate—a system that was very different from contemporaneous legal procedures enforced by aristocrats and the military.⁶⁶ However, he argues that since the fifteenth century, rabblers and violent mobsters from within the temples hijacked these procedures, and the decision-making process of temples turned into an unenlightened “government by foolish masses” (*shūgusei* 衆愚政).⁶⁷ More recently, Itō Masatoshi 伊藤正俊 has emphasized the shortcomings in the governance system of large temples (opportunism, elitism, violence, lack of order, etc).⁶⁸

Remarkably, scholarship has focused on the activities of certain elements among the clergy—known as *akusō* 悪僧 (lit., “evil monks”) or, in a later and now more common term, “soldier monks” (*sōhei*), and monastic riots and warfare that often resulted from decisions taken democratically by the clergy’s assembly.⁶⁹ As a result, medieval Buddhist institutions have been described as unruly, violent, and disruptive of state authority, and thus (more or less explicitly) deserving of being reigned in even by military force if necessary. Interestingly, in their attempt to depoliticize Buddhist institutions (in the sense of ignoring Buddhist institutions’ peculiar policies), most scholars have ended by legitimizing traditional political claims of military clans, often based on authoritarian Confucian ideas of social order and forced stability, rather than to examine in depth the political principles of Buddhist institutions that were based on different values. Without idealizing these political practices, these critiques are unfair, I believe, because (aside from the fact that there is no perfect form of democracy) they ignore that no other large and

⁶⁵ Kuroda 1980, p. 117.

⁶⁶ Seita 1995, pp. 248–249.

⁶⁷ Seita 1995, p. 257.

⁶⁸ Itō 1999, esp. pp. 245–261; Itō 2000, esp. pp. 128–138.

⁶⁹ For a critique of the image of “soldier monk” (*sōhei*), see Adolphson 2007.

influential institutional body, not just in medieval Japan but through the end of World War II, gave such importance to individual thought and expression.

In any case, against received knowledge that Japan did not have a republican tradition, it appears that Buddhist temples (and *kenmitsu* institutions in particular) were harbingers of republican and quasi-democratic political discourses and practices, and their influence continues to be felt, to a certain extent, even today. Of course, it will be necessary to study in greater depth the mechanisms that govern what might be called “institutional memory”—a sort of fundamental ethos intrinsic to Buddhist institutions that survives to a certain extent even when those institutions are transplanted into a different social, historical, and cultural context.

This will in turn open the way to further inquiries into other aspects of Japanese Buddhist culture. First of all, the autonomy and originality of Buddhist institutions (also in terms of political ideology, social structure, and actual policies) needs to be reevaluated. Secondly, the role of Vinaya in Japan needs to be revised—especially, the rules concerning institutional procedures and collective governance. Thirdly, Buddhist political thought needs to be reassessed beyond the received understanding of traditional Buddhist support of kingship. Finally, it is necessary to investigate more in depth the differences in political ideologies and practices among institutions belonging to different sectarian affiliations. In this respect, it is worth remembering that this paper has focused almost exclusively on large *kenmitsu* temples (Enryakuji, Kōfukuji, Mt. Kōya, Tōdaiji, etc.) in the Nara-Kyoto area; these temples appear to have adopted ancient Indian political structures. However, one wonders about the organizing principles and underlying ideology of other religious institutions such as Pure Land, Zen, and Nichiren 日蓮. They seem to have functioned according to a logic that was rather different from that of the *kenmitsu* temples. Especially in their initial phases, the followers of these organizations gathered around charismatic leaders and there seems to have been little collective deliberation. In the case of the Ikkōshū 一向宗 (later known as Jōdoshinshū 浄土真宗), the position of head of the sect (something totally absent in Indian Saṅgha) was hereditary and attributed to a direct descendant of Shinran 親鸞, the original founder. Zen temples, on the other hand, while preserving in their regulations (*shingi* 清儀) aspects from the Indian Vinaya, may have been influenced by Chinese Confucian and Japanese feudal patterns of authority.

In any case, my attempt to put India back inside Buddhism, as it were, and to look at the impact, more or less subtle, of a peculiar aspect of ancient Indian culture, namely, a republican form of governance, on the development of Japanese

Buddhism, allows us to shed a new and different light upon several aspect of premodern Japanese cultural history.

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HI *Heian ibun* 平安遺文, Komonjo-hen 古文書編, 11 vols. Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三, ed. Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1963-68.

MBD *Mochizuki Bukkyō daijiten* 望月仏教大辞典. 10 vols. Edited by Mochizuki Shinkō 望月信亨, expanded and revised by Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆 and Sekai seiten kankō kyōkai 世界聖典刊行協会. Sekai seiten kankō kyōkai, 1954-71.

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