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History of Shin Buddhism in the United States

Manimai Ratanamani

University of the Pacific

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HISTORY OF SHIN BUDDHISM IN THE UNITED STATES

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
College of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Manimai Ratanamani
January 1960
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PART I

SHIN BUDDHISM BEFORE THE SECOND WORLD WAR
CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL AND DOCTRINAL BACKGROUND OF BUDDHISM

The aim of this study is to tell the history of Shin Buddhism in the continental United States. In order to familiarize the reader with Buddhism, a brief historical and doctrinal background is presented here.

The founder and his teachings. Buddhism is now the predominant religion in certain countries in Southeast Asia, Tibet, and Japan. India is the place where this religion had its first appearance. The name "Buddhism" came from the word "Buddha" which means the Enlightened One or the Perfectly Awakened One.¹ This word is the title of the founder, whose real name is Siddhartha Gautama. He was the son of a wealthy and powerful Prince Siddhodana and Princess Maya of the Sakya clan.

According to historians, Prince Siddhartha was born in the year 566 B.C.² at Kapilavastu in northern India on the border of Nepal. From his birth he was surrounded with sensuous Eastern luxury. The prince received the education of an Indian noble, married a princess named Yasodara, and

¹The Buddhist Brotherhood in America, A Book Containing an Order of Ceremonies for Use by Buddhists at Gatherings (Los Angeles: The Buddhist House, 1943), p. 51.
had one son, Rahula. However, at the age of twenty nine, he was dissatisfied with his worldly pleasure and left home to search for truth and deliverance. He studied philosophy under several distinguished teachers of the day, but found that the methods of these teachers did not lead him to enlightenment. Prince Siddhartha then abandoned them and turned to practice ascetism. After having been an ascetic for six years, he realized that the extreme austerity was not the right way. He gave up and adopted the "Middle Way" which is the process of hard thinking and practice of mind control. Devoting himself to this way at the age of thirty-five, he attained the enlightenment beneath a Bodhi tree at Buddha-Gaya. From this time until his death at about the age of ninety he roamed the country and taught to all classes of people.³

The teaching of Gautama Buddha is called "Dharma." The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path are the fundamental things in his Dharma. The Four Noble Truths consist of the Truth of Suffering, the Truth of the Cause of Suffering, the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, and the Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering. According to this idea, all actual existence; including birth, decrepitude, sickness, and death; is suffering and sorrow. Its

cause lies in ignorance, such as, people consider impermanent things as permanent, pursue them, become attached and become unhappy when they lose them. These causes of suffering can be extinguished and enlightenment or "Nirvana" can be established by means of the Noble Eightfold Path, which consists of the right views, right thought, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditation. 4

Branches of Buddhism. In general Buddhism has been divided into two branches—the Hinayana and the Mahayana—which means, the smaller and the larger vehicle respectively. "Theravada" is another term for the Hinayana, since the meaning of the word is "the Way of the Elders." It is the preferred name for the people who belong to this branch. The difference between the two schools is one of interpretation. The Mahayana School feels that the spirit of the teaching is the guidepost to be followed, while the Theravada School clings firmly to the strict letter of the law. The ideal life of the Mahayana is the Bodhisattava. This is a person who, priest or layman, devotes himself to the salvation of all beings, even giving up his own, if necessary, for others. For the Theravada School the aim is to become

4 The Buddhist Churches of America, op. cit., pp. 2-3.
an Arhat, which is a person who devotes himself to Buddhist discipline.\textsuperscript{5}

From India, Buddhism spread in two directions, south and north. It went through some process of change and became the Thera Vada and the Mahayana respectively. The Thera Vada Buddhism, since its introduction to Ceylon in the third century B.C. and the unknown exact date in Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand, has become a powerful religion with great influence upon the people's life. The Mahayana School has been popular in the north, but it has not remained strong in all the countries it went into. It was introduced to China in the year 67 A.D. by two Indian priests. Three centuries later Buddhism became so prosperous that missionaries were sent to Korea and Tibet. After being well established in Korea, it went to Japan. During the 6th century, Korea had a close relationship with Japan. In the year 572, the king of Korea sent the images and scriptures to the Japanese court. From the court, it spread and became popular among the ordinary people. At the present time Buddhism does not occupy an important place in Chinese and Korean life, but it is a state religion in Tibet and a vital force in the cultural, social, and political life in Japan.\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{5}Tsuji, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., p. 16.
Sects in Japan. Buddhism remained in the same form as it first entered Japan for about two hundred years. Then a split began. This started when Dengyo Daishi founded the Tendai sect in the year 802. Two years later Kobo Daishi established the Shingon sect. Jodo, Zen, Shin-shu, and Nichiren were the other new denominations. Except for a few other small sects, there have been no new ones in Japan since 1275. The story of Japanese Buddhism for several centuries after that is principally the story of the four sects--Jodo, Shin, Zen, and Nichiren--with the Tendai philosophy as the intellectual background of the whole. As all of them belong to the Mahayana School, they all aim for the enlightenment or Nirvana with the Bodhisattava as its ideal life. However, each sect emphasizes something different and develops its own characteristics. The idea of doctrines, which presented here, is taken from Dr. Robert F. Spencer's Table of Comparison of Doctrines of Japanese Mahayana sects and the War Relocation Authority Report.

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7 The Buddhist Brotherhood in America, op. cit., pp. 58-61.


9 War Relocation Authority, "Buddhism in the United States" (Community Analysis Report No. 9, U. S. Interior Department Documents Section, Office of Reports, May, 1944), pp. 4-5. (Mimeographed.)
The Tendai Sect. The Tendai Sect realizes the teachings of Gautama Buddha by any and all means, it puts emphasis on harmony of all the teachings. There are images of Buddha in their temples. Its priests are faith healers.

The Shingon Sect. The Shingon Sect believes that mystical hymns control the finite world, so the emphasis is on magic and mysticism. The influence of Shintoism, another religion in Japan, is apparent in this sect in its tendency toward pantheism and its doctrine that the "Great Sun" is the source of all.

The Jodo Sect. The Jodo Sect is the sect which stresses faith in Amida Buddha. Happiness can be found in the present existence through faith. By the repetition of the word "nembutsu" alone is enough for a person to attain the enlightenment in the Pure Land.

The Zen Sect. The Zen Sect emphasizes stoicism, meditation, and stern self-discipline. The followers believe that through this a man can realize the Buddha essence. It also has connection with nationalism and the warrior.

The Nichiren Sect. The Nichiren Sect is the last major sect established in Japan. This sect represents a rebellion against the other older ones, especially the Jodo and the Shin sects. Its emphasis is on the repetition of the
phrase "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo." The followers believed that the realization of the Buddha essence comes through the written word. It receives the influence of Shintoism and associates itself with the idea of nationalism.

**The Shin Sect.** The Shin Sect is one of the major sects in Japan. As it is now the most popular one among the Japanese Americans in the United States, some details on historical development in Japan before it came to the United States is given together with its doctrine and characteristics.

The Shin Sect was founded in Japan by St. Shinran (1173-1262) in the year 1225. It was when he wrote his six volumes of sacred writings called *Kyo-gyoshin-Shomonri*. 10 The full name of this sect is Jodo Shinshu which literally means the True Pure Land Religion. 11 It has the concept that man is innately weak, incapable of enlightenment without a savior, who is known as Amida Buddha. By having faith and living a good life, one can attain enlightenment in the Pure Land. Anyhow, the repetition of the words "Namu Amida Butsu" (Homage to Amida Buddha) is necessary. This sect put

little stress on metaphysical doctrine and in comparison with other sects has very few ceremonies. Its priests are allowed to eat meat and marry. This is because St. Shinran had spent his life as a layman and recognized a normal life for the clergy.

After St. Shinran's death, the sect was divided into ten branches. Among them, the Nishi and Higashi Hongwanji are two major ones. Their true names are Hompa Hongwanji and Otaniha Hongwanji respectively. Besides the slight difference in the ritual such as in the chanting of the sutras, there are no marked doctrinal distinctions between these two branches. Only historical development is the cause of the two names.

Both the Thera Vada and the Mahayana came to the Continental United States about the same time but from different directions. The Thera Vada was introduced by the European scholars to the East Coast and was known exclusively among a few intellectual people. The Mahayana was brought to the West Coast of the United States by the Chinese and Japanese immigrants. The Chinese were not so active as the Japanese who brought with them all the six major sects of

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13 The Buddhist Brotherhood, op. cit., p. 61.

14 Tsuji, loc. cit.
Japan. However, only four of them—Shin, Shingon, Zen, and Nichiren—are important in the United States. 15

The situation of the Shin Sect in the United States.
To most non-Buddhist Americans, "Zen" is the familiar name and is often mistaken as the representative of Buddhism as a whole. As a matter of fact, it is just one small sect in the United States which is popular among few people, in comparison with the Shin Sect. Like other Japanese sects in the United States, it has only a few churches. It is only at San Francisco or Los Angeles that one can find the churches of these sects. The reason for being better known is that a great many books about this sect were written in English by a Japanese scholar, Dr. D. T. Suzuki. The one that really plays an important role in this country is the Nishi Hongwanji of the Shin Sect. Almost all the Buddhist churches in America belong to this branch. While headquarters of the Nishi Hongwanji has been established in San Francisco and their churches spread throughout the country, the Higashi has not made any attempt to organize itself. As there was no Higashi Hongwanji church in their community, all the Japanese immigrants of this sect went to the Nishi Hongwanji churches.

15 War Relocation Authority, "Japanese Groups and Associations in the United States" (Community Analysis Report No. 3, U. S. Interior Department Documents Section, Office of Reports, March, 1943), p. 3. (Mimeographed.)
Their children since then have become members of this branch. 16

For the above reason, this study on the history of Shin Buddhism in the continental United States deals only with the Nishi or Hompa Hongwanji.

16 Statement by George Suzuki, personal interview, December 8, 1959.
CHAPTER II

THE INTRODUCTION OF SHIN BUDDHISM TO THE UNITED STATES

Japanese immigrants. Shin Buddhism was brought to the United States by many classes of the Japanese immigrants. These people came to the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century. From the census figures there were only fifty-five Japanese in the United States in the year 1870.¹ Not until Japan legalized labor emigration in 1885 was the number increased rapidly.² From 148 in 1880 to 2,039 and 24,326 people in 1890 and 1900 respectively.³

An observation about these Japanese immigrants was made by one American scholar as the following:

Most of the Japanese who came directly to this country were young men. They came seeking opportunities to study, or better opportunities to gain a livelihood than were in prospect at home. They were, of course, drawn largely from the most intelligent and ambitious of the middle class. Along with these young men came a smaller number of older men who had failed in business or had found farming or wage labor in Japan unattractive. A third element came from Hawaii where a large percentage of the total number had been drawn from the poorest and most ignorant class. Many of the most ambitious of these, dissatisfied with their lot as poorly paid plantation laborers, availed themselves of the opportunity to come to the mainland. From Mexico came some corresponding

³ Ichihashi, loc. cit.
closely to the classes arriving from Hawaii, from Canada a few like those immigrating from Japan."

The majority of those applying for a passport in Japan before 1888 stated the intended occupation as students. After this year the number of intended laborers was higher than any other class. Most of these people who came before 1900 showed a tendency to settle in the United States. As they intended not to go back, they began to think about the possibility of having their old way of cultural and social life. This was to make themselves feel more at home. They felt the need almost immediately for religious organization in order to look after the problems of life and death such as funerals and memorial services. However, their motives were not purely religious. In studying the historical development of Buddhism in the United States one can see the wish for social recognition among these people. One study made by a Japanese minister in 1932 said, "The Japanese, as any other nation, are fond of politics, and the founding and managing of churches appealed strongly to their political vanities and ambition." 6

4 Ibid., p. 68.
5 Ibid., pp. 65-66.
Although these people longed to form their own religious community, the first step that roused their action came from the headquarters in Japan. There is a direct relationship between the Buddhism in the United States and in Japan; a brief outline of the situation of the organization and administration of the Nishi or Hompa Hongwanji headquarters in Japan is given here.

**Headquarters of the Shin Sect in Japan.** Besides some minor changes, the present organization and administration is the same as when it was first organized. The Lord Abbot is the head of the sect. This post is strictly held by the blood descendants of the founder, St. Shinran. Under him is the Board of Directors which is composed of one Chief Director and three more directors. These people are the administrators of all affairs of the Orders. They are appointed from among the high priests by the Lord Abbot. Under the supervision of this board are nine departments and several other institutions. Their legislative organ consists of an ecclesiastical diet called Shukai which is composed of both laymen and ministers. This diet meets once a year and plans the budget, enacts the laws and resolutions of the sect. The ward system is used in controlling churches. Japan
proper is divided into wards; each is supervised by a chief appointed by the headquarters at Kyoto. 7

Another thing that contributes to the continual importance of the headquarters is the system of ordination. The priesthood is given only to those who receive ordination from the Lord Abbot at the Hongwanji. Even now all people who intend to be ministers in the United States have to go to the Kyoto Headquarters. 8

The headquarters is also active in the field of missionary work both in Japan and abroad. Their work began in Manchuria, Southern China, and Korea as early as 1884. 9

In 1898 St. Myonyo, the Lord Abbot of the Hompa Hongwanji, dispatched Reverend B. Honda and Reverend B. Miyamoto, to investigate the possibilities of opening a mission in the United States. 10 On July 6 of that year, these two priests arrived in San Francisco. They stayed for two weeks and surveyed completely the status of Buddhist activities. Finding that two-thirds of the people were from provinces which had long been under the dominating influence of Nishi Hongwanji,


8 Hongwanji, op. cit., p. 3.

9 Ichihashi, op. cit., p. 222.

10 Nishi Hongwanji, The Remembering Features of the Late St. Myonyo, the 21st Chief Abbot of Nishi Hongwanji (Kyoto, Japan: Nishi Hongwanji, 1951), p. 3.
they advocated the formulation of a Buddhist Mission in the United States. 11

The movement of the Young Men's Buddhist Association. The coming of the two priests roused the desire of the Japanese immigrants to organize themselves and have their own church and minister. One week after the arrival of the priests, a group of young men met at the house of Dr. Haida, a physician, and discussed a project to form the Young Men's Buddhist Association. The plan was adopted and on July thirtieth of that year they celebrated the installation of their officers at the Pythian Castle Auditorium at 909 Market Street, San Francisco. This was the birth of the first Young Men's Buddhist Association which lay the foundation of the first Buddhist church in the United States. 12

Soon after this, the San Francisco Young Men's Buddhist Association sent Mr. M. Misaki to the Nishi Hongwanji Temple, Kyoto. He presented a petition signed by eighty-three Buddhists of San Francisco. The following is a part of the petition:

Ably succeeding St. Shinran, Lord Abbot Nyonyo has exerted the utmost efforts to promulgate the Teachings, and has been anxious to save sentient beings in the remotest countries. We deeply appreciate his venerable efforts and eminent kindness; however we, living in the

11 Tsuji, op. cit., p. 16.
United States, have not yet had an opportunity to hear
the Buddha's teaching.\textsuperscript{13}

After the Hongwanji Headquarters had considered the
request a decision to open a Buddhist Mission in the United
States was made. The Reverend Shuye Sonoda and the Reverend
Kakuryo Nishijima were sent.\textsuperscript{14}

**Headquarters in the United States.** While waiting for
the result of their petition, the members of the Young Men's
Buddhist Association met again and established the head-
quartners of the organization at 7 Mason Street, San Francisco.
On September 17, 1898, they had a celebration on the occasion
of the opening of the headquarters. From that day on, the
organization was very active. They had gatherings every
Sunday and held religious discussion every week. Special
religious occasions such as Gautama Buddha's birthday,
Kenshin Daishi's, etc., were observed.\textsuperscript{15}

Everything was ready for the arrival of ministers from
Japan who would make this organization into a complete church.
However, they carried on their programs and invited any min-
isters who happened to be in San Francisco to perform the
service. An example of this was when the Naval Buddhist
chaplain, Jundo Fujita, stopped by San Francisco on May 25,

\textsuperscript{13} Nishi Hongwanji, *loc. cit.* \textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} National Young Buddhist Association, *loc. cit.*
1899. He was invited to give nightly lectures at the Young Men's Buddhist Association headquarters which at that time was at 532 Stevenson Street.\footnote{16}

Shin Buddhism was officially established in the United States on September 3, 1899. On this day two priests--the Reverend Shuei Sonada and the Reverend Kakuryo Nishijima--arrived in San Francisco.\footnote{17} On their arrival, they founded a missionary station at the Young Men's Buddhist Association headquarters, which by that time had moved to 80 Polk Street, San Francisco.\footnote{18}

The first Buddhist Church. Since the Young Men's Buddhist Association was organized, people started raising funds to build their church. All the Buddhists in California at that time donated the money for their first church.\footnote{19} This church was at the same location as the headquarters.\footnote{20} As it was the only church and belonged to all the Buddhists in the United States, no name was given. Although having

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{16}{Ibid., p. 6.}
\item \footnote{17}{Tsui, op. cit., p. 17.}
\item \footnote{18}{National Young Buddhist Association, op. cit., p. 6.}
\item \footnote{19}{Statement by Reverend Sensho Sasaki, personal interview, November 27, 1959.}
\item \footnote{20}{Buddhist Churches of America, "60th Anniversary for the Buddhist Church of San Francisco," The American Buddhist, II (November, 1958), 1.}
\end{itemize}
ministers, the church was operated under the name of the Young Men's Buddhist Association. This name was changed into the San Francisco Buddhist Church in the middle of June in 1905. The reason for changing was because by that time there were several new Young Men's Buddhist Associations in other Japanese communities.

Up to the present time, the headquarters of the Nishi Hongwanji sect in the United States and the San Francisco Buddhist Church has remained together. However, the location changed several times. Following the earthquake of 1906 it moved to Buchanan Street. Seven years later it moved again to 1881 Pine Street. It was a three story building in which only the third floor was used as a chapel and ministers' residents, while the first and the second ones were a social hall and rooms for other purposes. It was torn down and a new one was built and completed in 1938. This new building has been designed differently from all other Buddhist churches in the United States. On the top of the building is a dome, or what it is called in the Thera

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21 Statement by Reverend Takashi Tsuji, personal interview, September 14, 1959.


23 Ibid., p. 48.
Vada Buddhist countries a "Stupa." This stupa contains a portion of the remains of Buddha brought from Thailand in the year 1935 by the Bishop Kenju Masuyama, the superintendent of the Buddhist Churches of America at that time. The present San Francisco Buddhist Church and the headquarters is still at the 1881 Pine Street.

The contribution of the Young Men's Buddhist Association. During this period when the two ministers served as the religious leaders and performed religious services, the group of the young men of the Young Men's Buddhist Association continued their own work which was a great contribution to the prosperity of Buddhism in the United States. They cooperated with the ministers in several ways. Lectures were held every Sunday at 2 p.m. On November 28, 1899, Buddhist instruction for Caucasians started. Two months later the Caucasian Buddhist study group was organized and study classes were held every Thursday. In the following year these young men set up a welfare and personal assistance department. They published a journal called Beikoku Bukkyo or American Buddhism. They set the example for the young Buddhists in other Japanese communities. In this way several other Young Men's Buddhist Associations were organized and churches then came into existence.

25 National Young Buddhist Association, loc. cit.
CHAPTER III

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCHES

Establishment of churches. The success of the San Francisco Young Men's Buddhist Association in having a church and ministers satisfied the Buddhist Japanese for a while. They were content because they had some ministers to go to their communities and perform the necessary religious services occasionally. In order to make it convenient for them to have a meeting place where all the people could attend the services, groups of young men in each community organized their own Young Men's Buddhist Associations and provided their social hall for religious purposes.

The first association outside San Francisco was at Sacramento. It was established in December, 1899.¹ In the beginning of the following year, this kind of organization appeared in Fresno and in Vacaville.²

As time passed by and more people settled in these districts, they began to see that the coming of the ministers to their communities once in a while had not met their needs. They became dissatisfied with the situation of being just branches of the San Francisco Young Men's Buddhist Association and felt the necessity of having resident ministers who

¹Ibid., p. 6. ²Ibid.
would devote their whole time to the welfare of their local churches. The Young Men's Buddhist Association in Sacramento again started to work for this. Members of the organization raised funds to build their own church and sent the petition through the San Francisco headquarters to the main headquarters in Japan asking for a minister. In answering the request, the Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto sent them the Reverend Ryotetsu Harada. In December 1900, Reverend R. Harada arrived and became the first minister of the Sacramento Buddhist Church.³

This same process was followed by the Young Men's Buddhist Association at Fresno whose name at that time was the San Francisco Buddhist YMBA, Fresno Branch. Reverend Fukyu Asaeda was sent from the headquarters in Japan and became the first minister of the Fresno Buddhist Church in the year 1901.⁴

Vacaville Young Men's Buddhist Association, one of the early organizations, did not go through this method of securing itself the status of an independent church in those early years as did the other two. It became a branch of the Sacramento Buddhist Church and had not separated nor became independent until 1909.⁵

There was a reason for the difference between the first two associations and Vacaville's. The Sacramento and

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⁴Ibid., pp. 71-72. ⁵Ogura, op. cit., p. 12.
the Fresno Young Men's Buddhist Associations were able to take the responsibility of financing their own organizational expense. They could raise enough money for their members to build the churches, pay the salary of their ministers, and supply all other needs of their churches. As the Young Men's Buddhist Association of Vacaville could not afford this, it had to remain a branch of one of the big churches. In this case the main church was the Sacramento Buddhist Church.  

This is one of the ways the number of Buddhist Churches grew. Most of them separated from the big church that sent ministers to commute to their meeting places and secured their own ministers and churches when their financial situation was good enough to provide it. The headquarters in the United States which was called the North American Buddhist Mission at that time also supported this process. It preferred many small local churches to a few big ones.  

Some churches, after separation from the mother church, grew so fast that they began to have their own branch churches which later became other independent churches. An example of this development was the Stockton Buddhist Church. As all other churches, it started with the Young Men's Buddhist Association. Every month a minister was sent from the San

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., p. 55.

\textsuperscript{7}Statement by George Suzuki, personal interview, December 8, 1959.
Francisco Buddhist Church to perform religious services and gave a sermon at the YMDA Hall. In 1907 it became an independent church and had its own minister. People from the vicinity of Stockton then had to come to this church. Later there were more Japanese people in Lodi. The Lodi branch grew and became another separate church in 1929.

For some new churches, the cause of separation did not arise only from inconvenience due to geographical circumstances, but also from the dispute between the branch church and its mother church. When disagreement started, the members of the branch church would wait until they were confident of their ability to handle the finance of their own church. In almost all cases, there was some minister who was willing to be in the new church, and led the movement. An example of a split of this kind is the Gardena Buddhist Church.

The Gardena Buddhist Church was first started in 1926. In this year the members of the Los Angeles Buddhist Church who lived in Gardena Valley opened a Sunday School and built their own church, even though there was no resident minister and the ministers from Los Angeles had to come to perform the service every month. It had its own members and funds. The

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8 Ibid.
9 North American Buddhist Mission, op. cit., p. 177.
10 Ibid., p. 387.
members considered it a church while it was not yet legally recognized by the civil law of California. The dispute started when a minister at the Los Angeles Buddhist Church, without the approval from the members of the Gardena Church, opened a Japanese language school at Gardena and reported to the North American Buddhist Mission that this church was its subdivision. Members of the Gardena Church then began to propose to have their church reorganized as an independent unit of the North American Buddhist Mission.

The progress was slow until a minister, who was sent to this church as a teacher of the Japanese Language School, joined them. After a bitter argument with the Los Angeles Church and the threatening to send petition to its headquarters in Kyoto, the North American Buddhist Mission recognized it as an independent church and formally appointed the same minister as the minister of the church.11

There was another group of churches which did not start as a small branch of a big church, but was established because the headquarters in Kyoto saw the necessity of establishing them. These are churches outside California. Churches which belonged to this group were the Buddhist churches at Salt Lake City and at Denver which were organized in 1912 and 1915 respectively.12

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The North American Buddhist Mission. From the process of the establishment of new churches, one can see that all of them had to have the approval of the headquarters in San Francisco. The San Francisco headquarters was first established as a mission station in 1899 by the first two ministers—the Reverend Shuye Sonoda and the Reverend Kakuryo Nishijima—as soon as they arrived in San Francisco. It became the headquarters of all the churches in the United States. The Reverend Shuei Sonoda was appointed the first bishop.

The headquarters at San Francisco was always at the same location with the San Francisco Buddhist Church. In 1927 it had as its name the North American Buddhist Mission. It was incorporated under the civil law of California in 1929. It controlled all the Shin Buddhist churches in Canada and in the United States. The total number of all the churches before the war was thirty-five.

The work of the North American Buddhist mission was to hold the parishes of the same sect together. It supervised

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13 Statement by the Reverend Takashi Tsuji, personal interview, September 14, 1959.
15 Spencer, op. cit., p. 70.
16 Ogura, op. cit., p. 4.
17 Spencer, loc. cit.
the management and main activities of all churches and ministers, arranged the tour of the guest speakers from Japan, published books on Buddhism, and reported the progress of the mission and churches in its official weekly magazine, called the Kyodan Times or the Buddhist Mission Times. This Bulletin was divided into English and Japanese parts. The voluntary ministers were its editorial staff.  

During the prewar period the North American Buddhist Mission had begun to realize the importance of having the English language as the means to communicate Buddhism to the American born Japanese. It started translating books on Buddhism into English, published new Sunday school texts in English, encouraged the American born Japanese to become ministers by giving scholarships for training in Japan.  

The North American Buddhist Mission was organized into a hierarchy with the bishop at the head. The bishop was selected and appointed by the headquarters in Kyoto which contributed three thousand yen per year to which was added his fifteen hundred dollars salary from the N.A.B.M.  

The bishop's duty was to be responsible for all the Shinshu affairs to the headquarters in Japan. He had to manage the funds that the main headquarters gave to the mission,

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20 War Relocation Authority, op. cit., p. 4.
spread the religious message, be the head of all ministers in the United States and preside over all the works of the mission. The bishop had to make a tour to all the churches every year. The purpose of this was to inspect the condition of the churches, meet ministers, and consider the possibility that the headquarters could help them in their problems. He also had the power to transfer the ministers and assign the new ones to their posts.

From the N.A.B.M's first establishment to the time when the war broke out, there were seven bishops and one interim bishop. The following are their names and the period of time in which they were in office:

Bishop S. Sonoda, September 1899 to December 1900
Bishop T. Minazuki, December 1900 to October 1901
Bishop K. Hori, March 1902 to September 1905
Bishop K. Uchida, August 1905 to September 1923
Bishop H. Sasaki, November 1926 to July 1928

Interim Bishop the Reverend I. Kyogyoku
Bishop K. Masuyama, July 1930 to 1937
Bishop R. Matsukage, 1938 to June 1948

Under the bishop was a board of three councilors which were elected from the ministers at the annual ministers' meetings.

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22 Information from the Reverend Lavern Sasaki.
conference. There was also a secretary who was chosen from among the ministers by the Bishop.\textsuperscript{23}

The annual budget of the North American Buddhist Mission came from the contributions of the clergy and lay Buddhists in the United States and the headquarters of the Nishi Hongwanji branch in Kyoto.\textsuperscript{24}

The N.A.B.M. divided its churches in the United States and Canada geographically into seven dioceses which are shown in Table I.\textsuperscript{25} Each of them was entrusted to the care of a senior minister subordinate to the Bishop in San Francisco. All of these dioceses operated as a unit, all the churches under one diocese cooperated for the common interest of the members and the Buddhist churches.\textsuperscript{26}

Besides being divided geographically, the churches also can be classified into three groups. Class A was the churches founded in the early days and situated in big cities where new immigrants kept moving in. Class B, also early, was founded in areas where the influx of new immigrants was not so great. Consequently these were not as large as the class A churches. Class C included all the later founded

\textsuperscript{23}Ogura, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 1.  
\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., p. 4.  
\textsuperscript{25}War Relocation Authority, \textit{loc. cit.}; Ogura, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 8.  
\textsuperscript{26}North American Buddhist Mission, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 7.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of Dioceses</th>
<th>Headquarters of the Diocese</th>
<th>Cities that had Buddhist Churches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>Vancouver and Raymond in Canada, Seattle, White River, Tacoma, Yakima, Portland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern California</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>Sacramento, Vacaville, Placerville, Florin, Stockton, San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda, Berkeley,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Palo Alto, San Jose, Lodi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central California</td>
<td>Fresno</td>
<td>Fresno, Bakersfield, Hanford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal California</td>
<td>Guadalupe</td>
<td>Guadalupe, San Luis Obispo, Watsonville, Salinas, Oxnard, Santa Barbara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern California</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>Los Angeles, Gardena, San Diego, Browley, El Centro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle West</td>
<td>Salt Lake City</td>
<td>Salt Lake City represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>Denver represented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE II

## CLASSIFICATION OF CHURCHES AND DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Location of Churches</th>
<th>Date of Establishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fresno</td>
<td>1900</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>1901</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stockton</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>San Jose</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oakland</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watsonville</td>
<td>1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tacoma</td>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Hanford</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guadalupe</td>
<td>1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bakersfield</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vacaville</td>
<td>1909</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Berkeley</td>
<td>1911</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Santa Barbara</td>
<td>1912</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White River</td>
<td>1912</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salt Lake City</td>
<td>1913</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palo Alto</td>
<td>1914</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alameda</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placer</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Florin</td>
<td>1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brawley</td>
<td>1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salinas</td>
<td>1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>El Centro</td>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>San Luis Obispo</td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oxnard</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yakima</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lodi</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardena</td>
<td>1931</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and small churches. The classification of these churches is shown in Table II.27

The administration of churches. Although all these churches were units of the N.A.B.M., they could manage their own church activities any way they liked as long as there was no conflict with the N.A.B.M. They were organized under the civil law of the states they were in. However, almost all of the affairs of the church were run by the ministers. The reason for this was that the prewar churches, although having in many ways been Americanized, still followed the pattern of the church administration in Japan.

In Japan the priesthood was passed on from father to the oldest son. The family was in charge of the same temple and administered it for generations and generations. In this way the priest really had the complete responsibility for financing and maintaining the temples. However, they also had to be fully qualified in their general education and the knowledge of Buddhism.28

In the United States, priests were called ministers. They still had to go to be ordained at the Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan, but only a few American born Japanese followed the Japanese custom of the priest's oldest son succeeding

27Ibid., the whole book.
to his father's profession. Most of the priests were born in Japan and were sent for a period of time to the United States by the headquarters. It is difficult to tell the total number of the prewar ministers in the United States because some of them came and stayed for about four years and then went back to Japan and came back again. Some of them settled down and some married Japanese Americans. Those who stayed in the United States long became more tolerant of the second generation and had more democratic views in church management while the others still had the same old ideas as it was in Japan.

Although they were appointed and transferred to different churches by the headquarters, the minister was financially supported by the congregation. He received a regular monthly salary. In most churches the ministers were also teachers of the Japanese language schools and got a salary from this source. The money which he received from performing special service was supposed to revert to the church treasury.

The minister's duties were to perform religious services, help the people to solve their problems, be the teacher

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29 War Relocation Authority, op. cit., p. 4.
30 Statement by James Iwata, personal interview, November 27, 1959.
31 Statement by the Reverend Sensho Sasaki, personal interview, November 27, 1959.
in the Japanese language school and be the advisor of the
different affiliated organizations. In some churches there
was more than one minister so only the chief minister was
responsible for the finance of the church.\textsuperscript{32}

Every year in February there was a three day business
meeting of all the ministers in the United States at San
Francisco. If all of the ministers in the church could not
go, at least one minister had to be sent as a representative
for the whole group. At this convention they reported the
financial situation and activities of their churches and
elected the councilors to the Mission. It was also the time
for them to suggest any improvement or make a request to be
transferred.

During summer there was another convention held at
some convenient church. Ministers who were appointed to
make any special studies or investigation reported the pro-
gress of their work. During this time all the ministers took
some special courses such as Buddhist hymns, Sunday school
work, etc. Each church paid for part of the expense of this
convention which was also subsidized by the headquarters of
the N.A.B.M.\textsuperscript{33}

The income of the church came from several sources.
The major portion was from the offerings for religious special

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{33}Ogura, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 5-6.
services rendered by ministers. The rest was the membership dues, contributions to the church alms-box, and miscellaneous, such as income from the Japanese language schools. Each family paid the membership dues which ranged from three to five dollars per year.\textsuperscript{34}

All these moneys were used on the salaries of ministers, teachers of church schools, employees, taxes and assessments on the property, and other expenses for its services and activities. At the beginning almost all the churches were in debt. This was because of the amount of money they spent on building the church.\textsuperscript{35}

As every church was incorporated under state law, it had to have its own board of directors to be responsible for the finances, policies, and administration. The board of directors consisted of president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and several other trustees. This board was subordinate to the ministers. In the prewar period only a few American-born second-generation Japanese, or what were called Nisei, took posts in the church administration. At that time most of them were still too young to participate in activities. The board of directors was controlled by the group of Issei, or the first-generation Japanese. As they themselves had

\textsuperscript{34} Statement by the Reverend Sensho Sasaki, personal interview, November 27, 1959.

\textsuperscript{35} Oguma, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 15-16.
close ties with Japan, they still had the same old ideas about the situation of a minister in a church. In some churches, the board always accepted the minister's demands and submitted to his financial management.36

All of these churches had their own publications which were weekly, monthly or quarterly, depending on church's financial situation. They were either in mimeographed form or in bulletin. At the early period the Issei, or the first generation Japanese, were the editorial staffs so the publications were in Japanese. Later on when the number of Nisei, or the American-born Japanese, increased, the papers had both Japanese and English sections.37 This showed the concern of the church for the young people on whom the future of the church depended. More details of their activities in the church and affiliated organizations will be discussed in the next chapter.

36 Spencer, op. cit., pp. 73-74.
37 Ogura, op. cit., p. 16.
CHAPTER IV

BUDDHISTS AND AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CHURCH

The previous chapters have already shown that the birth and the development of churches depended mostly upon the work of the Young Men's Buddhist Associations. This chapter will first deal about the Buddhists in general and the people who belonged to this kind of association and other affiliated organizations of the church; then the establishment and the role of each organization will be discussed.

I. BUDDHISTS OF THE SHIN SECT IN THE UNITED STATES

Number. In the early period of immigration, almost all Japanese immigrants, with the exception of a very few Christians and Buddhists of other sects, belonged to the Shin Sect. Although in the later period there was a process of changing religion, which was due mostly to the social opportunities and the desire to be Americanized, the majority of the Japanese were still Buddhists of the Shin Sect. In 1936 the number of people who belonged to this sect, estimated by the War Relocation Authority from the Census of Religious Bodies, was 43,164. In 1940 the number remained about the same.¹

¹War Relocation Authority, op. cit., p. 3.
Characteristics. The study of the Japanese people, which had been done by several scholars on the basis of both the Immigration Commission Report and the government statistics, showed that the Japanese were intelligent and law abiding people. Only a few committed crimes of serious nature, and very few were arrested for theft. They were generous in their relations with others and spent money for entertainment and giving gifts. There was no problem of dependency upon the public because they helped each other. They were clean, generally temperate in drinking, and industrious. Only a small percentage of these people was illiterate.²

Although not all the Japanese immigrants and their children were Buddhists, one can assume that the Buddhists in the United States were desirable citizens. The majority of the Buddhists lived in the country and were engaged in agriculture or related industries.³

During the first years of immigration while there were only a few Buddhist churches in the United States,


Buddhism lost ground to Christianity. Some of the young unmarried men who came to the United States with the hope of earning money and went back home, turned to the Christian churches. The reason was that the Christian churches offered opportunities for Americanization and gave them more hope for better jobs and a quicker return to Japan. They were also provided with their needs for social life. Even marriage bureaus were established. The Buddhist churches when first established did not offer these things to their members.

The attitude of second-generation Japanese. However, most of the first-generation Japanese still remained Buddhists. As they stayed longer and gave up the thought of returning to Japan, they started accepting American customs. They sent their children to American schools. Being associated with children of other faiths and unable to understand much of their parents' religion, in which almost everything was in the Japanese language, these second-generation Japanese, Nisei, tended to become Christians. Some of them considered Christianity as one means of being Americanized. They accepted religion together with other American customs.

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4 War Relocation Authority, op. cit., p. 8.
5 Ibid.
Some of these Nisei felt that Buddhism ran counter to assimilation because it still observed things Japanese. 7 Some of them thought of Buddhists as being backward groups because they did not mingle much with the Caucasians like the Japanese who were Christians. 8 Some of them were under the influence of their environment. The author of the book *Japanese in the United States* had quoted a young Nisei's words who wrote contemptuously of his parents' religion, as follows:

Last summer I attended a Buddhist ceremony back home. I had no notion of going, but just to satisfy my dear mother, I went. My two younger sisters, both in high school, went there with me. When the ceremony began I could hardly keep myself from laughing, since the priest's chanting sounded so funny. I saw my two sisters giggling with their handkerchiefs against their mouths to avoid any distraction. I couldn't stand it. This shows me how much we American-born Japanese are losing the customs of our forefathers. This is one of numerous examples. 9

These Nisei then turned willingly to Christianity. However, there were many of them who went to the Christian churches because their parents sent them there.

During the early period in some Japanese communities there were no Buddhist churches at all. The parents had the

7 Millis, *op. cit.*, p. 268.
8 Thomas and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-158.
9 Ichihashi, *op. cit.*, p. 344.
idea that young children should go to church. They did not care what church it was. They sent them to Christian churches which were convenient for the children. As these children grew up, they became Christians and their parents did not think that it was wrong. They wanted their children to return to be Buddhists when there was a Buddhist church in their communities, but they would not say anything if their children continued to go to Christian churches.\textsuperscript{10}

The attitude of first-generation Japanese. From the survey of the ten per cent of the 97,456 Japanese in California in 1930, the first-generation Japanese preferred Buddhism to Christianity. Three-fourths (77 per cent) of them were Buddhists, while only one-fifth (18 per cent) were Christians. For the second-generation Japanese, Nisei, only thirty-nine per cent remained Buddhists.\textsuperscript{11} This same source gave the reason that the "preference for Christianity was associated with better education, better use of the English language, urban life, and greater ownership of farms but not of home or business."\textsuperscript{12}

During this time more Buddhist churches were established. The North American Buddhist Mission, ministers, and the Issei had realized that in order to keep the Nisei there

\textsuperscript{10}Thomas and others, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 234 and p. 369.
\textsuperscript{11}Strong, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 169. \textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 182.
was the necessity of adapting Buddhism to the new environment and customs. They encouraged the establishment of several affiliated organizations by the young people. While the churches were controlled by ministers and Issei groups, the affiliated organizations were opened for the Nisei to seek their social prestige. It will be seen that these organizations emphasized the social side of religion.

Before going further to the Nisei and different kinds of organizations, a description of the Issei attitude towards religion should be considered first. The Issei Buddhists felt more at home when they went to church and heard the minister perform services in Japanese. However, they did not attend the church regularly. This was because Buddhism did not count on going to church as an important thing. The reason given by a Buddhist priest around the year 1942 was that these Issei felt that no matter whether or not they attended the regular Sunday services their faith was the same. They went to church only to warm up what they already had, not to acquire new faith.\(^\text{13}\)

The Buddhists, whether they actually engaged in church activities or not, observed Buddhist practices at home. In the prewar period almost every house had a small butsuden, a household Buddhist altar.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{13}\) Spencer, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 96.
Some of the Issei fulfilled their desire for social prestige by becoming officers in churches and acclaimed as community leaders.\textsuperscript{15} They joined the church activities more after being discriminated against by the Immigration Law of 1924.\textsuperscript{16}

II. AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CHURCH

Young Men's Buddhist Association. For the Nisei, religion was less attractive. They joined the activities in the church-affiliated organizations for the purpose of having social prestige. The most important one was the Young Men's Buddhist Association.

The Young Men's Buddhist Association or YMBA was first organized in San Francisco in the year 1898 by a group of young unmarried Issei. The Issei in other Japanese communities soon followed this example and had YMBA in their own districts. These associations were the seed for the Buddhist churches.

After the Buddhist churches were established, the YMBA continued their work as affiliated organizations of the church. In the early period all the members were the young unmarried Issei. The minister of their church acted as president. Later on some of these people went back to Japan,

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 203. \textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ogura, op. cit.}, p. 85.
some married and did not attend the association regularly. As time passed by and the Issei were getting older, they became interested in the church activity more than the YMBA and transferred to church. The Nisei then took their place. 17

Around the year 1925, the Nisei, whose average age was seventeen to nineteen, gained control of the YMBA; they changed from having the minister as the president of their organization to an elected president from the members. The minister became an adviser. 18 They still kept on the religious activities while more stress was put on the social ones. They had study groups who studied the scripture. 19 They supported the Buddhist Sunday Schools by operating buses and automobiles for children. Some of them were also Sunday School teachers. 20 They helped to raise funds for the needs of Japanese both in the United States and in Japan. In 1921 the members of Stockton YMBA gave a concert and sent the profit of five hundred dollars to the earthquake victims in Japan. 21


18 Ibid., p. 35. 19 Ibid., p. 53.

20 Ogura, op. cit., p. 25.

21 The League of YMBA of North America, op. cit., p. 57. (The date of earthquake in this source seems to be an error, it probably should read "1924.")
All these YMBA's had athletic, literary and oratorical, musical and social departments. Each club had baseball, basketball, jujitsu, and fencing teams, which were sent to an inter-association every year. The club also sponsored English and Japanese debate teams. Some YMBA's such as Fresno, Sacramento, and Watsonville had Boy Scouts. Each YMBA had its own publication.22

Their regular meeting was once a month at the local church. Usually members of the YMBA met and had social gatherings every time after the religious meetings, either on Sunday or during the week after special evening services. They played games and cards. Each member had to pay the membership fee, which was between one and three dollars. Any time the club needed money, they put on some kind of entertainment program and social parties, such as plays, movies, and dancing.23

In 1930 there was a desire to form a league of YMBA, but, after a discussion about it in one meeting, nothing materialized. In January, 1936, the San Francisco YMBA invited all the other associations to send delegates for the purpose of giving a farewell party to County Otani Senju, who came on a tour throughout North America, and of considering the formation of a league. Eight YMBA's, which

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22 Ibid., pp. 33-62. 23 Ibid.
came from Alameda, Oakland, Fresno, San Jose, Stockton, Berkeley, Palo Alto, and San Francisco, attended the meeting. It was held at the San Francisco Buddhist Mission Headquarters on January 15th and 16th. They drew up a constitution and elected officers for the newly established league which was entitled League of Young Men's Buddhist Association of North America. It was inaugurated in San Francisco on May 26, 1926. The Reverend Tensai Terakawa, one of the originators, was chosen president.

After it was established, other YMBA's soon joined the league. The research, athletic, social, and literary departments were formed. As there were more members in the league, the area was divided into regions: Coast, San Francisco Bay, Northern California, Central California, Southern California, and the region outside California.

In order to keep all the YMBA's in the leagues informed of each other's activities, they had a publication called Bhratri. It was a 120-page journal which had both English and Japanese sections. This bulletin came out twice a year.

Conferences were held every year at some convenient churches. At that time they chose their new president and officers. As the aim of the league was to establish opportunities for mutual contacts and a mutual exchange of religion, they supported the Pan Pacific YMBA Conference and the
first and second Canada-Hawaii-American YBA Conferences, which were held in the years 1929, 1930, and 1934, respectively.

The League had as its motto "Wisdom and Mercy." There were also league songs in Japanese and in English, a league pin, and banner. 24

However, this league was unsuccessful in becoming a national or even state-wide association because the Japanese-American Citizens' League (JACL), a non-sectarian political organization devoted to the further assimilation and the like, attracted more Nisei. 25

**Young Women's Buddhist Association.** The other affiliated organization which was similar to the YMBA was the Young Women's Buddhist Association (YWBA). The first one was established in 1893 in San Francisco. Later they were established in other Japanese communities. The ages of the members were from sixteen to twenty-five years old. They also met in churches and had ministers as their advisors. The membership fee was three dollars.

Although their activities were fewer than those of the YMBA, they were of the same nature. The YWBA met after

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25 Spencer, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
religious services and had business meetings on Saturday or Sunday. The members were also the supporters of the Sunday Schools. They had oratorical contests every year. Each YWBA had their own mimeographed bulletin. They raised money to help people in need. The YWBA had parties at least three times a year; these were on New Year's Eve, Halloween night, and during the graduate season. 26

In the summer of 1926, during the Buddhist conference at Monterrey, groups of young girls in California met and started a movement for the organization of a North American YWBA League. They started by organizing four district YWBA Leagues: Northern California League, the Central California League, the Southern California League, and the Coast District. On July of the following year these four district leagues sent fifty-two representatives to White Point, near Los Angeles, where the Buddhist Summer Conference was held. They met and formed the North American Federation of Young Women's Buddhist Association Leagues. Miss Kazuko Matsumura was elected the first president. The league continued to be consisted of four districts until 1932. In this year the league was divided into six Districts, namely the Bay District, Coast District, Northern California District, Southern California District, and the South Central Coast District.

The activities of the North American Federation of Young Women's Buddhist Association Leagues were similar to those of the young men's league. They were also reported in the Bhārati which became the publication of both groups. There were league songs both in English and Japanese, pin, banner, and uniform. One-week conferences were held in July of every year. This was in conjunction with the Sunday School Teachers' Association Meeting. A large number of the league's members were either Sunday School teachers or assistants; therefore, the work of Sunday Schools had become one of the most important activities of the league. 27

Sunday School. The Sunday School was the other important church-affiliated organization. The first one was established in the year 1913 by the headquarters in San Francisco. It started with only fifteen pupils. 28 During the early period every church had at least one Sunday School. Ministers and their wives were teachers. Later when the number of schools and the pupils increased, members of YMBA and YWBA


who passed the training course became Sunday School teachers. All the teachers were supervised by ministers.29

These Sunday Schools were conducted either in regular school buildings or in private homes. Classes were divided into three groups; elementary, intermediate, and YBA groups. Japanese was the language used in school. There was a magazine called The Study of Sunday School which published the work of the musicians and teachers of Sunday Schools, text books, instruction, and Sunday School cards in both Japanese and English.

The aim of the Sunday School was to teach Buddhism to the second generation and to train them for social activities. Therefore, besides attending classes the students organized boys' and girls' clubs which had four or five parties each year.

Almost all Sunday Schools did not have their own account and treasury. They received the financial support from the church and voluntary donations. Children did not have to pay for the enrollment.30

The number of Sunday Schools and their pupils increased from only one school with fifteen pupils in San Francisco to fifty-six schools with 6,969 students in 1930.31 In 1940 there were sixty-five Sunday Schools with 7,500 students.32

29 Ibid. 30 Ogura, op. cit., pp. 18-20.
31 Ibid., p. 18. 32 Spencer, op. cit., p. 81.
Japanese language school. Besides Sunday Schools, the Buddhist churches maintained the Japanese language schools. There were both regular schools on weekdays and special kinds on Saturdays. Their classrooms were in the church buildings. In the early period some of these schools had dormitories, but after 1931 all of them were closed. The minister of the church was the principal of the school. Teachers were ministers, minister's wives, and laymen. The American born Japanese who could speak both English and Japanese were always responsible for the kindergartens. Their salaries were according to their experience. Parents were also asked to form the association and help officers manage schools.

The first Buddhist Japanese language school was established in San Francisco in the year 1915. It started with only two students. The number of schools and students increased rapidly, and in 1931 there were thirty-one weekday schools with 2,732 students. This was due to the increase in number of the Nisei. Their parents sent them to the language schools to learn both the Japanese language and Japanese custom.

\[34\] Ogura, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
The income of the Japanese language school came from the tuition fee and from the support of the church. In Saturday schools each student paid monthly fees of two dollars. If more than one of the same family attended the same school, the rate was cheaper. The parents paid three dollars for two children and three and one half dollars for three children. For the weekday school, the tuition was around thirty dollars per family per year.36

Women's Buddhist Association. All the already mentioned affiliated organizations of the church were for the Nisei groups. This does not mean that the Issei did not have any role in social activities. While the Issei men controlled the churches, the Issei women formed their own associations called the Women's Buddhist Association (WBA) or Fujinkai in their communities. Ministers' wives were usually the leaders. Each of the Women's Buddhist Associations had its own president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. Their activities were the same as the YWBA.37

Other small clubs. Besides all these important church affiliated organizations, there were some small clubs of young boys or young girls such as the Proto Club38 for

36 Ibid., pp. 21-22. 37 Ibid., pp. 22-23.
young boys and the Lotus Blossom Girls. These clubs had ministers as their advisors. Their activities were that of the YMBA and YWBA in a smaller scale.

In considering all of these church affiliated organizations since their first establishment up to the time when the Second World War started, one can see the influence of Christianity and American custom. Sunday Schools were organized by churches. YMBA and YWBA followed the pattern of YMCA and YWCA. In order to attract the second-generation Japanese, Buddhism in America adapted more and more to American life. However, before the United States went into war, the process of Americanization went on slowly. A great change of Buddhism in America came during and after the war.

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39 Ibid., p. 60.
PART II

SHIN BUDDHISM DURING AND AFTER THE WAR

UP TO PRESENT TIME
CHAPTER V

SHIN BUDDHISM IN THE RELOCATION CENTERS

(1942 - 1945)

The process of evacuation. The process of Americanization of Shin Buddhism in the United States would have been slow if Japan had not been at war with the United States. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December, 1941, put Japanese immigrants and their American-born children in a position which affected Buddhism. All Japanese and the people of Japanese ancestry were declared to be "alien enemies" in the Presidential Proclamations of December 7 and 8. The government put a curfew on all of them. They could not be out of the house after 5 p.m. The Federal Bureau of Investigation started arresting Issei leaders in business, officers of Japanese Association and those of the Kendo Fencing Organization, all Shinto and some Buddhist priests, newspaper owners and editors, and most teachers in Japanese language schools.

This was followed by the Executive Order 9066 in February, 1942 which ordered all people of Japanese ancestors to evacuate from the Military Area Number I. This area consisted of the western third of Washington and Oregon, the western half of California, and the southern half of Arizona. On August 8th of the same year there was another order of the
Western Defense Command. This time they had to be out of the Military Area Number II which consisted of the whole of California, parts of Washington, Arizona, and Oregon. They had a chance to go to any other parts of the country if they could be out of this area within ten days. Most people could not be ready in this short time; therefore, 110,000 people were forced to go to the Assembly Centers administered by the Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA). They stayed there until the War Relocation Authority (WRA) opened ten Relocation Centers in November, 1942.¹

These ten relocation centers were located in seven states: two in California, two in Arizona, two in Arkansas, one in Utah, Colorado, Idaho, and Wyoming. The size of the centers varied from the smallest one, designed for an evacuee population of about 8,000, to the largest for 20,000. At all these centers the evacuees were supplied with shelter, food, and other facilities.²

After the arrest of the Issei leaders in Japanese communities started, there were only a few activities of the church and its affiliated organizations. These things came to a complete stop when the order for leaving the Military Areas came into practice. Big churches were closed and left

¹Thomas, op. cit., pp. 78-85.
²Ibid., p. 88.
under the custody of attorneys; small churches could not afford this, therefore they were just locked up.3

When these people arrived at the assembly centers, they found out that the Wartime Civil Control Administration were opposed to the Buddhist groups. Buddhist gatherings in the assembly centers were allowed only once a week. The use of the Japanese language was limited. Since the Issei ministers could not conduct the service in Japanese, Nisei ministers, who could use English, had to perform the duty. The young Buddhist Association, the combination of Young Men's Buddhist Association and the Young Women's Buddhist Association, sponsored all the religious and social activities in the various centers.4

**Birth and development of churches.** A few months later all evacuees were transferred from the assembly centers to different relocation centers. A survey on the evacuees' religious beliefs was started at once. The report was that 48.5 per cent of the American born and 68.5 per cent of the foreign born were Buddhists.5 This number varied from one center to another. Those preferring Buddhism to Christianity

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3 Statement by George Suzuki, personal interview, December 13, 1959.
4 Spencer, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.
were highest among evacuees in the Tule Lake Camp and were lowest among those in Camp I at Poston. The War Relocation Authority saw the necessity of providing a place for Buddhist gatherings. The recreation hall was allowed to be altered as a Buddhist church, but the people had to pay their own expenses for alteration. The Buddhists in the centers then donated their services or money to the building of an elaborate Buddhist shrine, the nembutsu, and other church’s appurtenances. Freedom of religious worship was assured; people who had hesitated to identify themselves as Buddhists soon joined the young men’s group in establishing a United Buddhist Church.

Before the evacuation, different sects of Buddhism in the United States had little contact with each other. In the relocation centers all the Buddhist sects came together and formed a non-sectarian church. The board of trustees was composed of representatives from all groups. Priests of different sects took turns in conducting services, but at each service the particular ritual needs of each sect were given consideration. This kind of church did not last long. Doctrinal Differences, financial problems, and political schism soon caused the split.

6 Thomas and others, op. cit., p. 70.

7 Statement by Flora Suzuki, personal interview, December 8, 1959.
In Poston members of the Shin Sect withdrew from the United Church and resumed their former rites. At the Heart Mountain Relocation Center there were both the financial and doctrinal conflicts. Ministers of the Shin Sect demanded an equal division of the contributions from the congregations. Ministers of other sects refused and withdrew from the United Buddhist Church. Doctrinal conflict came from the Nichiren Sect which had a nationalistic tendency.

Political schism was shown in the church at Jerome Center. It started when three people in the board of the trustees of the church showed hostility to registration for the army. The other trustees, fearing that this action would make Buddhism appear to be a pro-Japanese religion, requested the three people to resign. Following these three dissenters' resignation, three priests and 300 people separated from the United Buddhist Church and established the Daijo Bukkyo Church. The members of this new church were suspiciously regarded as pro-Japan by other evacuees.8

It was the young Nisei groups who took the initiative in establishing the Buddhist churches at every center. After having churches, they formed the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YBA) and Sunday School. At the beginning almost all the church activities were controlled by Nisei. Later the

8War Relocation Authority, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
Issei, recovered from their fear of being accused of being disloyal or pro-Japanese, resumed their position in the church. The Issei women in the center formed the Women's Buddhist Association or Fujinkai. By this time the position of the young Buddhists was already strong. They gained more control in church besides carrying on their program of social activities.

The birth and development of churches in different centers were the same. An example here is taken from the study of Robert F. Spencer on Buddhist Churches at Canal and Butte Section in the Gila Center.

The Buddhist Church in Canal Section was altered from the recreation hall by the people's donations. The people then elected a Board of Directors of the church which was composed of the president, vice-president, a treasurer, auditors, and a representative from each block. Church income came from membership fees and contributions in the alms-box. The church continued to be the religious and social center. The young men's groups who organized the YBA and Sunday School still had close relation with the church. They met at the church building and had ministers as their advisors. YBA service was held during the day while the Issei service was held during the evening.

9 Statement by George Suzuki, personal interview, December 13, 1959.
10 Statement by James Iwata, personal interview, November 27, 1959.
held in Japanese in the evening or late afternoon. Fujinkai or the organization of Issei women was also organized. The activities of all the church-affiliated organizations were the same as they had been before the war.

The Buddhist Church at the Butte Section, Gila, was not so successful as the one at the Canal Section. Among three ministers, only one belonged to the Shin sect. As he was a rather young Nisei minister, some of the Issei preferred the older Zen ministers. Sunday School and YBA were also organized. Services and other activities were the same as at the Canal Section.11

During the first year of establishment of Buddhist churches in the relocation centers, there were only few Buddhist priests because a fairly large number of them were interned in camps administered by the immigration authorities. Those who were permitted to evacuate with their families did all the religious work. For this reason in some centers there were not enough ministers. In order to have more ministers, the evacuees petitioned the War Relocation Authority to transfer some ministers from other centers to their camps. Such a thing happened at the Rohwer Relocation Center, Arkansas.

11Spencer, op. cit., pp. 132-142.
In the early period there were two Shin Buddhist ministers at Rohwer Center: the Reverend Mr. Misutani and the Reverend Mr. Unno. Later these two ministers were sick and could not continue their religious work. People then petitioned the War Relocation Authority to transfer some ministers from other camps. The officials arranged for Reverend Kono, a minister from the Jerome Center, Arkansas, to commute to Rohwer until a new one arrived. Six months later the Reverend Mr. Hayashima was sent from the Heart Mountain Center and became the minister in charge of the Rohwer Church until the center was closed.\(^\text{12}\)

At the beginning of the second year, ministers who were proved having no association with politics were permitted to leave the interned camps and join their families in the centers. They then performed their duties there. These ministers were paid monthly from the church fund. At the Canal Buddhist Church, Gila, each of them received a salary of $19 per month. At the Butte Section before the establishment of the church the average salary of a minister was $5 to $15 per month. However, all these priests had extra income from performing marriage and funeral services.\(^\text{13}\)

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\(^{12}\) Statement by George Suzuki, personal interview, December 13, 1959.

\(^{13}\) Spencer, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
As ministers of this sect were not trained to be faith healers, their incomes were lower than those of the other sects.¹⁴

As the Buddhist churches had no support from outside like the Christian churches, they had to provide their own religious materials. The ministers in each center with the help of the Young Men's Buddhist Association published Buddhist scriptures, songs, and literature both in English and Japanese. Besides this the YBA in each center had its own periodicals. The War Relocation Authority did not censor these materials, but the directors of publication were asked for cooperation in not publishing anything that would incite the people. The evacuees donated for the expense of the materials used in the publication while the War Relocation Authority supplied the printing machines.¹⁵

The members of Shin Buddhists in Relocation centers consisted of three groups of people: Issei, Nisei, and Kibei. The Issei or the first-generation Japanese and the Kibei or the American born Japanese who had been educated in Japan took religion as a means of gaining certain prestige and of securing a degree of political control in the centers. These two groups tended to be pro-Japanese. When there was a process of army registration in February 1943, a large

¹⁴Ibid., p. 169.

number of Issei and Kibei renounced their loyalty to the United States; they were sent to the Tule Lake Center. 16

It was to the contrary in the case of Nisei. Most of them were willing to register and serve in the armed forces in order to prove their loyalty to the country. However, some of them refused registration because their parents did; some felt that they should not be confined in the centers because they were American citizens. 17

Relocation Program. Around the same period the War Relocation Authority started the "Relocation Program." This new program gave the right to all evacuees who were considered loyal to the United States to move out of the centers and settle down in any part of the country outside the military zone along the Pacific Coast. Most of the young people decided to go. They preferred to try a new job rather than to stay in the camp supported by the government. In this way the Japanese Americans scattered to the eastern and midwestern sections of the United States.

After the moving out of a large number of people, there were only a few people left in some centers. They were transferred by the War Relocation Authority to other camps.


For example, two thousand evacuees in Jerome Center had to go to the Butte Camp in Gila. All the residents in the camp then cooperated in religious work. The condition of the church remained the same until the War Relocation Authority closed all the centers on January 2, 1946.

**New churches outside the centers.** As the number of Japanese Americans outside the center increased, the need for the Buddhist church arose. There was no problem for people who settled in Denver and Salt Lake City because there were Buddhist Churches there already. Only the groups that went further into the east had to establish their own communities and churches. The Issei laymen organized Buddhist gatherings and had discussions on religion. Later, when there were more people, they established their own church and asked the War Relocation Authority to send them a minister. The center responded to the request and gave assistance to the people and their churches until the end of the program.

When these churches outside had more members, an inter-project meeting of members of YBA was held. The first one was at Salt Lake City in May 1943. This was followed by

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19 *War Relocation Authority, Uprooted Americans in Your Community*, p. 2.

a convention at the same place in July of 1944. All the representatives from the centers and the newly formed Japanese communities in the Midwest and the East attended this convention. It marked the beginning of a movement to Americanize Buddhism.

The prominent results of having been in the relocation centers were the gaining of controlling power in churches of Nisei, the establishing of new churches in the Midwest and in the East, and the faster process of Americanization. More details on these changes of characteristics and condition of the Shin Buddhism will be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER VI

THE POST-WAR PERIOD

Situation of churches. During the time when all churches in the Military Area including the headquarters of the North American Buddhist Mission were closed and temporary churches were established in the Relocation Centers, churches in the free zone were still open. They were in Denver and Fort Lupton, Colorado; Mesa, Arizona; Salt Lake City and Ogden, Utah; and New York City. Before the war, all of them were comparatively small (in comparison with the churches in the West Coast). The growth in number of members increased rapidly after the Resettlement Program of the War Relocation Authority. People who preferred to resettle in a place where there were already Japanese communities and churches decided to go to these cities. After they had settled down, they joined the local churches.

At the same time some groups of the evacuees who had self-confidence went to the Midwest and to the East where there were no Japanese communities before. At the beginning these people still wanted to return to the West Coast, but as time passed by, they found that there were more opportunities to earn their livings there. Both those who had no

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property in their former home town and those who preferred the new area where they found less discrimination against Orientals decided to have their permanent home there. When this idea came to their minds, they started organizing Japanese communities and established their churches.

All new Buddhist churches in the Midwest and in the East were first organized by laymen in a form of Buddhist gatherings in some private houses. When the number of people increased, they rented halls as their meeting places, and sent petitions to the War Relocation Authority. Realizing the need of the people, the WRA under the Resettlement Program arranged for transferring ministers in the relocation centers to these new communities and gave some financial aid. 2

The news of good opportunity spread. The evacuees in the relocation centers who were formerly unwilling to take a risk outside the centers soon changed their minds and went to the Midwest and to the East. As population in Japanese communities increased, the churches gained more members.

When the Resettlement Program came to an end on January 2, 1946, 3 these churches were already self-supporting.

The Midwest Buddhist Church in Chicago, Illinois, can be used as an example for the birth and development of

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2 Statement by the Reverend Sensho Sasaki, personal interview, November 27, 1959.

3 War Relocation Center, Uprooted Americans in Your Community, p. 2.
churches in the East and in the Midwest. It started as religious gatherings of young Japanese Americans in a private house. The number of people who attended these meetings increased so rapidly that they had to rent a hall for this purpose. They then sent a petition to the War Relocation Authority asking for a minister. As a result, the Reverend Mr. Kono, a minister in one of the relocation centers, was transferred to Chicago in 1944. On his arrival, the Midwest Buddhist Church was established at the Parkway Community House. With the desire to have their own church building, members raised funds, bought a property, and built the church. It was completed in September, 1950.

Reorganizing of YBA. During the period of development of churches outside the relocation centers, the young men's group or YBA took an initiative in reorganizing the Young Men's Buddhist Association. In May, 1943, an inter-project meeting of the Association was held in Salt Lake City for the first time since evacuation. The aim was to make Buddhism more attractive to the Nisei. This was followed by a series of conferences.

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6 Ibid.
The most important convention was in July, 1944. All Nisei representatives from both Nishi and Higashi Hongwanji churches in the centers as well as the newly formed midwestern and eastern Japanese communities were present. They agreed to revive the national YBA, reconstruct the general church organization, and join the Nishi and Higashi Hongwanji together under the same headquarters—the Buddhist Mission of North America which would have as its new name the Buddhist Churches of North America. A new constitution which repudiated any tie with Japan was drawn. Under this constitution, offices in the new headquarters and in the local churches would be occupied by Nisei with the help of different Issei advisory councils. Buddhism in the United States would sever completely its ties with the foreign culture. It provided for the election of a bishop by members of the affiliated churches instead of being appointed by the headquarters in Japan. All the other officials of the central organization would be elected by mail ballot.

At this meeting English was suggested as the language of the church.\(^7\)

The constitution at Salt Lake City was opposed by Issei ministers who still clung to the old idea. As all of them were used to the old system of church management in

\(^7\)Spencer, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 174-177.
Japan, they felt that the changes would affect the appearance of Japanese Buddhism in the United States. Some of them were afraid that they would be controlled by the young Nisei ministers. Most of them decided to support the old bishop, Bishop E. Matsukage, who nominally still remained the head of the Buddhist Mission of North America and controlled all the churches both in the centers and in the free zone from the temporary headquarters at the Central Utah Relocation Center in Topaz.

Besides the opposition from all the Issei ministers who objected to the Americanization of Buddhism, the Nisei had their own problem of the need for new ministerial personnel. Although the plan for training Nisei for the priesthood had been started around the year 1930, there were still only a few Nisei ministers in 1944. The old tradition that all the ministers had to be ordained by the headquarters in Japan was still used.

In spite of these two important problems, the constitution drawn at the Salt Lake City Convention in 1944 was ratified by the individual churches. Several things were responsible for this success. The first one was that

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8 Ibid., p. 177.
9 War Relocation Authority, "Buddhism in the United States," p. 3.
10 Spencer, op. cit., p. 178.
the delegates to the convention were able to swing the vote of the various YDA chapters in its favor. The other reason was that some supported the new constitution because they realized the necessity of adapting Buddhism in the United States in order to keep the support of the second and third generations. The last reason was that the new organization had voted for temporary reappointment of the Bishop Mutsukage as the head of the Buddhist Churches of America.\textsuperscript{11}

The resettlement of people. After the ratification of the constitution, a board of control of Buddhist Churches of America consisting of twelve laymen and three Nisei ministers was elected. This board launched several democratic plans in order to make Buddhism appeal to the young people. These plans were interrupted by the resettlement of people which followed the repeal of the West Coast exclusion order. This reopened the West Coast on January 2, 1945. The announcement of the War Relocation Authority on the same date stated that all the centers would be closed by January 2, 1946.\textsuperscript{12} During this year people moved out of the centers to scattered destinations so they did not have time to formulate any new plans.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 179.

\textsuperscript{12} War Relocation Authority, \textit{Uprooted Americans in Your Community}, pp. 1-2.
Almost all the people in the centers at that time returned to the West Coast. Most of the residents in the newly formed Japanese communities in the East and in the Midwest decided to remain there. Only those who still had property in the West moved back. However, not all of those who came back went to the same place where they left. They chose a new community where they saw better opportunities.

**Changes in church situation.** This change of residence affected the condition of local churches. Some class A churches became less important while the class B churches grew rapidly. At the same time some small churches had to be closed because of lack of financial support. Examples for these kinds of changes could be found in the Stockton Buddhist Church, San Jose Buddhist Church, and the Vacaville Buddhist Church. Before the war the Stockton Buddhist Church was a class A church, and San Jose Buddhist Church belonged to the class B. After the war, there was a change in the size of the Japanese communities in these two cities. New people settled in San Jose while only some of the old residents returned to Stockton. The San Jose Buddhist Church gained more members and gradually became one of the most important churches. While some churches became bigger or just maintained their own former condition, some churches like Vacaville Buddhist Church had to be closed. This was
because only a few people went back to Vacaville so there was no necessity in keeping the church open.\textsuperscript{13}

It was not only the people who did not go back to the old places, but some of the ministers also moved to another church. Some ministers who helped the people organize new churches in the East or Middle West remained there such as the Reverend Mr. Kono, and he continued to be chief minister at the Midwest Buddhist Church instead of coming back to his former church, the Hanford Buddhist Church.\textsuperscript{14}

When people came back to their old homes they found that some churches were ransacked and burned down by people who stole the church property and wanted to destroy the evidence. These churches had to be repaired before they could be used again. However, they still provided the place for people who had no home by opening the buildings as hostels.\textsuperscript{15}

The people who had to go to the hostels were those who either sold their property before entering the centers or those who never had any permanent home before the war. The first group had to stay in hostels until they could find new houses to move in while the second group had to wait until they could find some job that provided them places to

\textsuperscript{13} Statement by Flora Suzuki, personal interview, December 8, 1959.

\textsuperscript{14} Statement by George Suzuki, personal interview, December 13, 1959.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
The majority in the latter group were old bachelors who came to the United States before the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 which limited immigration of Japanese laborers in the United States.\textsuperscript{16} Before the evacuation, they were migratory laborers who, with some help from the Japanese Community, managed to maintain themselves quite regularly. As they did not marry, most of them had not thought about accumulating money until they were rather old. When they started doing so the war broke out, and they were put in the centers where they could not earn any money. After the centers were closed, these people did not have enough capital to start any business and some were too old to go back to do hard work again. The churches then had to provide rooms for them to stay while they looked for some kind of jobs.

For this reason after the war both old and new churches opened hostels. An example of this was at San Jose. In 1945 the San Jose Buddhist Church opened hostels at both church buildings as a temporary housing for returning evacuees.\textsuperscript{17}

In some locations in the Midwest and in the East where there were no churches, Buddhists secured buildings

\textsuperscript{16}War Relocation Authority, \textit{Uprooted Americans in Your Community}, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{17}San Jose Buddhist Church, \textit{Golden Anniversary} (San Jose: San Jose Buddhist Church, 1950), p. 3.
for temporary residences. These Buddhist hostels became the nuclei for the founding of new churches. 18

Although the formal aspects of religious reorganization was deferred by the living conditions of the people, the church hostel was controlled by its Nisei cabinet. The priest was the nominal head of each hostel. A number of conflicts arose between the Nisei officers and the Issei advisory group who desired to regain their power in church management. 19 However, under the YBA support, the Buddhist churches began to have more democratic procedure. By the year 1948, every church had its own congregation constitution. The governing body consisted of a president, a vice-president, an executive secretary, and a treasurer. Most of the elected officials were Nisei. The individual church was free to handle its own income and expenditures. The church decided on the amount of its monthly or annual membership fees. Church income also came from the special donations of individuals or families and the contribution box. With this money the church had to pay for the salaries of the ministers, the costs of building maintenance and repair, church debts and contributions of a variable amount to the San Francisco synodical headquarters. Although the post-war church had

19 Ibid., pp. 180-181.
more expenditures, the income did not increase. This was because most churches still had not opened the Japanese language schools which were one source of church income.20

The situation of the church income affected the ministers of almost every church. Before the war the ministers had the average salary of $125.00 per month. After the war only a few big churches could maintain the same average; most of them had to cut the minister's salary at least in half. Some ministers got only 1/3 of what they used to receive before.21 The priests had to take some employment which caused serious problems. Most of the Issei priests had been admitted to the United States after the Exclusion Act of 1924 which did not allow them to be employed. As there were no positions in the Japanese language school for them, they had to work as gardeners, janitors, or farm helpers, and so forth.22 However, these priests still kept on doing their duties. They preached at the Sunday School services, visited sick people, continued to be the advisors of the YBA groups, and performed all other special services.


21 Spencer, Japanese Buddhist in the United States, p. 182.

22 Ibid.
such as marriage and funeral services.\textsuperscript{23} As time passed by, church income increased; their situations gradually became better.

All these ministers were still under the bishop at the headquarters. After the change of the name of the North American Buddhist Mission into the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) in 1944, the bishop was elected by the ministers' association. The BCA became the central of all Buddhist churches in America and Canada with only an indirect connection with Nishi Hongwanji headquarters in Kyoto, Japan. English language was used more in printed materials on Buddhism. However, during this period there were still the problems of the hierarchy, of the redistribution of the clergy, and of the training of candidates for the priesthood.\textsuperscript{24}

\textbf{Affiliated organizations.} During this period the YBA's which had been united into a national organization played an important role. Churches depended upon these democratic social groups. There was a considerable overlapping of organization. Some people held both the positions in the YBA and in church.\textsuperscript{25}


\textsuperscript{24} Statement by the Reverend Sensho Sasaki, personal interview, November 27, 1959.

\textsuperscript{25} Statement by James Iwata, personal interview, November 27, 1959.
The national YBA consisted of the Western Young Buddhists' League (WYBL) and the Eastern Young Buddhists' League (EYBL). The WYBL was the combination of the pre-war West Coast YMBA and YWBA leagues. The EYBL was the new league organized by the East and the Midwest YBA's. It was first suggested by the Reverend Syodo Kono of the Midwest Buddhist Church in April, 1945. The constitution was adopted and ratified by the New York, the Cleveland, and the Midwest YBA's. In October, 1945, officers were elected by mail. Later on all the YBA's in this area joined the EYBL.

The activities of the YBA were the same as before the war. Members of the YBA supported the Sunday Schools, raised funds for their churches, arranged social outings after attending church services, and so forth.

Following the same pattern of the YBA were the Junior YBA's. Young boys and girls in every Japanese community were encouraged to organize the associations. The primary purpose was to create interest in church and to prepare the members for the YBA. These junior YBA's sometimes had another name such as the Junior YBA of the Midwest Buddhist Church called

27 Ibid.
28 San Jose Buddhist Church, op. cit., p. 28.
themselves the Delaires.\textsuperscript{29} Their activities were the same as those of the YBA's: participating in the church activities, raising funds, having inter-tournaments in sports, and so forth.

Besides these two kinds of associations, the Nisei had started another important organization called the Young Adult Buddhist Association (YABA). It was first started in Fresno in 1946 with the name Buddhist Friendship Society. Members of this society were Nisei who considered themselves too old to participate in the YBA activities and too young to join the Issai. All of them were the former YBA members who after they got married had stopped participating in the YBA activities. After the war these people became interested in religion and social activities again. YABA was organized in every community. The age of these groups varied from one place to another. Although their social activities were the same as the YBA, they were more religious and stressed more on religious discussion and the prosperity of Buddhism in the United States.\textsuperscript{30} The YABA from every district in California joined into the Western Young Adult Buddhist League (WYABL).

\textsuperscript{29}MBC Juniors, "Delaires," \textit{The Midwest Buddhist, VII} (January, 1951), p. 17.

\textsuperscript{30}Statement by James Iwata, personal interview, November 27, 1959; statement by the Reverend Senko Sasaki, personal interview, November 27, 1959.
in 1949. The WyARL consisted of five districts: Northern, Bay Region, Coast, Central California, and Southern California. There were also YABA's in other districts outside California, but they still had not organized themselves as a league.

Most Issei, who had already lost control of the church to the Nisei, did not approve of the YEA social activities. A comment made by an Issei which represented general ideas of the first generation is as follows:

I don't like to see my children use the churches to have a good time. Religion is something that should come from the heart, from the inside. Some of those young kids act just like the church is a dance hall. But my wife said to me that maybe it's a good thing they do go to church. When they do, they hear about religion even though they danced afterwards. They should all have some kind of religious training and I don't care if they go to a Christian church. That's better than being nothing at all. I can't teach my children about Buddhism; I don't know enough about it myself. The church is the only way. What I don't like to see is these inexperienced boys try to run the church; even if the sensei (priest) does help, some of them are trying to do things too much their own way.

It is true that some of these Nisei went to church because they wanted to attend social meetings. Some of them

32 Western Young Adult Buddhist League, Directory 1956 (San Francisco: WYARL Publication, 1956).
33 Statement by George Suzuki, personal interview, December 13, 1959.
knew very little about history or doctrines, but this was due to language barriers. Some Issei ministers could not speak English, some could speak but not well enough to make the Nisei understand. Before this time books on religion were all written in Japanese. The Nisei had tried to solve this problem. YMCA services were conducted in English on Sunday morning. English hymns were sung. All periodicals had both English and Japanese parts. Books on Shin Buddhism were translated. More stress was put on the training of English speaking ministers. Several scholarships were available for young people to study Buddhism.¹⁵ No matter what was in their minds, the participation of the members of YMCA has kept Shin Buddhism alive in the United States.

CHAPTER VII

THE PRESENT SITUATION

After many changes during the post war period Shin Buddhism in the United States has become more practicable and attractive to the American-born Japanese. Social activities of the church affiliated organizations are still important in bringing these young people to church, but they have more knowledge on the doctrines. For them now, church is not just a social meeting place. They participate in all church administration and plan for the prosperity of their churches which are under the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA).

I. BUDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA (BCA)

Administration. The BCA is the center of Shin Buddhism in the United States. All churches, ministers, and affiliated organizations of the churches, although independent in their local administration, are still under its control. Its headquarters is still in San Francisco. The present staff are Bishop Shinsho Hanayama, the Reverend Takashi Tsuji, Director of the Bureau of Buddhist Education, the Reverend Shozen Naito, Executive Secretary, and Hiroshi Kashiwagi, English Coordinating Secretary.
The bishop is the head of all the fifty-two Shin sect churches in the United States and fifteen churches in Canada.\(^1\) According to the constitution drawn in 1944 he has to be elected by the BCA Ministerial Association. This method has been used only once. In June, 1948, Reverend Enryo Shigefuji was elected bishop.\(^2\) He remained in this position until his death on August 30, 1958.\(^3\) At this time a new procedure was used. The Reverend S. Naito, the executive secretary at that time, served as an interim bishop. The Kyoto headquarters nominated three high priests in Japan as candidates for this position. Their names and qualifications were sent to the Ministerial Association. The ministers in the association voted for the qualified person and submitted their decision to the BCA Board of Directors for approval. Through this process the Reverend Mr. Hanayama has become the bishop of the BCA serving under the three-year term with unlimited reappointment.\(^4\)

The duties of a bishop are: to maintain direct connection with the main church in Japan, to be the head of all

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\(^1\) Buddhist Churches of America, "Outline of Administration of Headquarters" (San Francisco: BCA Headquarters, 1959), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

\(^2\) San Jose Buddhist Church, op. cit., p. 8.

\(^3\) Buddhist Churches of America, "Funeral Services Held for Bishop Shigefuji," The American Buddhist, II (September 15, 1958), p. 1.

\(^4\) Statement by George Suzuki, personal interview, October 6, 1959.
churches in the United States and Canada, to assign and transfer ministers, and to go on an annual tour to observe conditions of churches under the BCA. In performing his duties he has the help from an advisory board consisting of five ministers from the Ministerial Association and five laymen from the Board of Directors. Members of this board are not required to live in San Francisco. They hold an annual general meeting. The Bishop or the Chairman of the BCA Board of Directors may call a special meeting whenever it is necessary.5

Under the Bishop is the Board of Directors which is the governing body of the BCA. Every district of the BCA sends one appointed minister and three elected members as their representatives. These districts are Pacific Northwest, Bay District, Coast District, Northern California, Southern California, Intermountain, and Eastern Districts. In addition to the representatives of seven districts are Bishop, Executive Secretary, Chairman of the Ministerial Association, seven members elected at the annual general meeting in February, advisory board, and a representative from each of the affiliated organizations—Western Young Adult Buddhist League, National Young Buddhist Association,

5Statement by the Reverend Sensho Sasaki, personal interview, November 27, 1959.
National Fujinkai (Women's) League, Federation of Western Buddhist Sunday School Teachers. 6

This Board of Directors meets at least four times a year. The general meeting is in February. In this meeting the Board of Directors passed the annual budget. The income of the BCA headquarters comes from these main sources: the honbu hi or the voluntary contribution from every church, one dollar supporting membership dues, donations, voluntary contributions from affiliated organizations, and profits of the Sale Department. This money is spent on the management of the headquarters office and the salary for the staff there. 7

Ministerial training and educational program. Another source of income of the BCA comes from the Special Projects Fund Program. The drive is conducted each year to raise funds to promote the training of future ministers with a scholarship program, the training of Sunday School Teachers, research and publications, missionary activities, and to provide for the retirement fund for ministers.

This program was launched in 1956 by the BCA headquarters. Without active campaigning by the Fund Committee, the approximate amount received from voluntary contributions

6 Buddhist Churches of America, Outline of Administration of Headquarters, p. 1.

7 Statement by George Suzuki, personal interview, October 6, 1959.
was $10,000. In 1957, the committee set a goal of $50,000 of which $30,000 would be used for training of English-speaking ministers while the rest would be divided into a ministerial retirement fund and a contingency fund. With the support from the church proper, BCA ministerial group, the Western Young Adult Buddhist League, the National YBA and the National Fujinkai League, the program was successful. The Reverend Gyoyu Hirabayashi of the Oakland Buddhist Church was selected as the administrator and went overseas to set up this work. The ministerial training center was established in Kyoto, Japan, in the early part of 1957. Five Japanese ministerial candidates were trained in conversational English at this center.\footnote{Buddhist Churches of America, "Bulletin No. 78" (San Francisco: Buddhist Churches of America, February, 1958), pp. 1-2. (Mimeographed.)} Two hundred to three hundred dollars per year grants were awarded to individuals who were studying at United States colleges and intended to become Buddhist ministers of the BCA. Scholarship grants of $200 to $1,000 per year were given to Buddhist ministers who desired to further their linguistic and research studies at United States colleges.\footnote{Buddhist Churches of America, "Special Project Fund 1957" (San Francisco: Buddhist Churches of America, December, 1957), p. 4. (Mimeographed.)} In 1958 a plan to transfer the Ministerial Training Center to the United States was proposed and adopted. At present time the training centers are at...
the Berkeley Study Center and the American Buddhist Academy in New York City.

Under this program the Ministerial Retirement Fund was established. Sunday School Departments, the Berkeley Study Center of the BCA, and the New York Buddhist Academy have received financial support in their programs. Scholarships are also granted to students who want to study Buddhism such as a $1,000 grant for a graduate student in the Oriental Language Department at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Besides the ministerial center in Japan, the BCA has stressed the educational programs in the United States. Lectures, pre-ministerial training courses, lay leader training, research in music and publications, and seminars were carried on at the BCA Study Center in Berkeley, California, and at the American Buddhist Academy in New York City. There is also a Bureau of Education at the headquarters which carries publications and worship materials that have connection with Buddhism; it has in its sales department, for example: incense, ojuzu (rosary), books, pamphlets, and medallions. Materials for use in Sunday School can be found at the Sunday

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10 Ibid., p. 2.

11 Buddhist Churches of America, "BCA Board of Directors Meeting (San Francisco: Buddhist Churches of America, August 23, 1959), p. 2. (Mimeographed.)
School Materials' Department in Lodi, California. BCA sponsors a summer seminar at the Asilomar Conference grounds at Pacific Grove, California. Extension seminars are also sponsored by the BCA in the outlying districts. 12

Its official publications are Horin and The American Buddhist. Both of them are monthly periodicals that publish BCA news and short articles on Buddhism. Horin is a four page Japanese pamphlet with an English page; The American Buddhist is in English. Their present editors are the Reverend Chonen Terakawa and Hiroshi Kashiwagi. 13

Relationship with its headquarters in Japan. Although the Buddhist Churches of America is an independent organization, it is affiliated with the Hompa Hongwanji in Kyoto. The Lord Abbot Kosho Ohtani, the chief patriarch of the Jodo Shinshu sect, made a tour of the churches in the United States and Canada in 1958-59. 14

II. CHURCHES

Relationship with BCA. The relationships between BCA and all local churches in the United States are somewhat the same. Each church is an independent organization with its

13Ibid. 14Ibid.
own constitution; the bishop from the BCA headquarters goes on an annual tour to observe the church situation. However, the relation is closer because these churches send representatives to participate in the BCA administration, and ministers are under the control of the bishop and the board of advisory.

**Administration.** Every church has an Executive Board which is composed of laymen serving voluntarily. This board is the real governing body of local churches. Finance, rules and regulations, legal problems, and all the administration of the churches are under its responsibility. Two representatives are sent from each board to the district laymen meeting called Shinto kaigi which meets at least twice a year in order to study and act on all problems of the churches in the district. This Shinto kaigi serves as a liaison body between the BCA and local churches. At this meeting three representatives are elected to the BCA Board of Directors.15

Church income comes from membership dues, donations, benefits from putting on bazaars and entertaining programs such as movies, and talent shows. Membership dues vary from church to church. The rate is from $5 to $25 a year. Some

15Statement by George Suzuki, personal interview, October 6, 1959.
churches own income properties while the rest are planning to follow the same example. The expenditures of these churches are spent on ministers' salaries, maintenance of the building, Sunday School, honbu hi for BCA, publications, and so forth.

Ministers. The income and expenditures of these churches are in proportion with the class of the churches. Small churches that have small numbers of members usually have low incomes and less expenditures. In these churches there is only one minister who performs both the religious duties and other administrative work of the church. In the larger ones there are several ministers; the chief minister is responsible for the administration of the church while the others devote their time to performing religious services and doing further research on Buddhism. Their duties are almost the same as before: to give sermons on Sundays, to visit sick people, to give advice to the members and to church affiliated organizations, to teach Buddhism and spiritual suffering of human being, to perform services, to attend church conferences, to be guest speakers, and so forth. 16

Most of the people who want to be ministers have come from the ministers' families. This is not due to the old

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16 Statement by Takashi Tsuji, personal interview, September 14, 1959.
Japanese tradition of following the father's profession, but because they themselves want to be ministers. The requirement is that they have to graduate from colleges in the United States and receive three or four years training in Buddhist universities in Japan or in training centers in the United States. The centers for training ministers in the United States are now at the BCA Study Center in Berkeley and at the American Buddhist Academy of New York. After that they have to pass two tests in order to be ordained. The ordination still has to be done at the Mother Temple of the Hongwanji Sect in Kyoto, Japan. The bishop at the BCA headquarters then appoints and assigns them to different churches.  

Under the BCA policy the ministers are transferred rather often. One reason for doing this is to give a chance for each minister to try his method of solving the problems and of improving church situations in different places. It is also the way to promote ministers. As every church is financially supported by its congregation, the ministers of large churches always receive higher salaries than those of the small ones. However, the rate of salary is not much different because each church has tried to give their ministers as much as the others do. The average salary of a

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17 Statement by Taitetsu Unno, personal interview, September 3, 1959.
minister is $275 to $350 per month. Together with this he is provided with housing. The church also pays for his health, sickness and hospitalization insurance. Since 1957 ministers who had served more than fifteen years and who are over sixty-five years old have received pension from the Ministerial Retirement Fund.

These ministers can marry and live a life of a layman. The only difference is that they have more knowledge on Buddhism that can be conveyed to other people. Some people call them "sensei" which means teacher. They are expected to lead a rather exemplary life. Their actions must meet the approval of the people. In general they are highly respected. At the present time there are over 75 ministers in 52 churches.

Services. As most members of the churches now are English speaking groups, every minister has to be able to conduct the service in both languages. English services are held in the morning and Japanese services in the afternoon or in the evening. At the Stockton Buddhist Church there are

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18 Statement by Takashi Tsuji, personal interview, September 14, 1959.
19 Statement by George Suzuki, personal interview, October 6, 1959.
21 Buddhist Churches of America, Outline of Administration of Headquarters, p. 1.
three services on Sunday: two in the morning and one in the afternoon. The first morning service is for Sunday School students who are in lower grades. It is in simple English. Words in hymns are put on the big board so that all children can read and sing. The other morning service is for English speaking adults. The one in the afternoon is for Issei and the old Nisei. It is usually conducted in Japanese. However, on certain days when the majority of the congregation are Nisei, the minister uses both Japanese and English. The services in Buddhist churches in the United States are very much the same as those in the Christian churches. One can see the Christian influence. They have Buddhist music which some of them are taken from the Christian hymn books. Some churches started the custom of passing the donation or offertory baskets.

For people who cannot attend the services at churches on Sundays, there are services conducted through radio. This was started ten years ago by the Fresno Buddhist Church of the Central California District. It has broadcast every Saturday and Sunday. The Stockton Buddhist Church now acts as the center of the Northern California District by broadcasting a weekly fifteen-minute Buddhist program at the Radio Station KJOY every Sunday at 6:45 a.m. It consists of a sermon in Japanese and in English. All the ministers of the
Northern California District alternate delivering the sermons.  

**Social and religious activities.** Every church has almost the same social and religious activities. On Obon festival day, they have guest speakers come to their churches and have Japanese dances in the evening. A week before the Hanamatsuri Day or Buddha's Birthday, members of churches prepare food and take it to the Japanese patients in hospitals. On New Year's Day they give presents to the old people who live in church hostels. However, churches in the same area arrange their schedules together so that their members can participate in any activities they like.  

Buddhist church also acts as a medium of cultural exchange. Whenever there is any exhibition or demonstration on Japanese art, such as Flower Arrangement Exhibits, Oriental Art, Tea Ceremonies, and so forth, the church is asked to contact the members who can do all these things.  

**III. AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS**

**Japanese language school.** Some big churches still have Japanese language schools. The Japanese language school

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is no longer a means for earning profit because there are
only a few students. Classes are held either on week days
or weekends. This depends upon the consideration of each
church. At the San Jose Buddhist Church it is on weekdays
while at the Stockton Buddhist Church it is on Saturdays.24

**Sunday School.** Closely related with the church is the
Sunday School. At present all Sunday School classes are con-
ducted in English and mostly by members of YBA and YABA.
Teachers have to receive the training under the supervision
of the ministers. Each Sunday School may systemize or
reorganize its own classes, but all of them use the text
books and materials published by the Sunday School Materials
Department.

In every Sunday School the superintendent and teachers
meet once a week, usually after class period on Sunday.
They discuss problems pertaining to religious lesson pro-
jects and methods to improve the school. Ministers of the
church also participate in the discussion and give sugges-
tions. All the teachers belong to the Federation of Western
Buddhist Sunday School Teachers. They hold four district
meetings and one district conference each year before they
meet at the annual league conference.25

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Junior YBA, YBA, YABA, and Fujinkai. Present active affiliated organizations of the church are the Junior YBA, YBA, YABA, and the Fujinkai. They still maintain their old activities while new things are added. Every year the YBA's in each district arrange for three-day religious retreats. YBA and YABA co-sponsor teenage conferences, baseball league for teen age, boy scout and girl scout troops. The YABA is more influential than YBA because it consists of different age groups. When the YBA members feel that they are too old to be in the YBA, they resign and join YABA. In this way YABA has more members. Officers of the church executive board and of the BCA Board of Directors are YABA members. Church financial support comes mostly from this organization.26

IV. CAUCASIAN BUDDHISTS

Members of the Shin Buddhism in the United States are still largely the people of Japanese extraction. Only a few non-Japanese Buddhists join churches of this denomination. Most Caucasian Buddhists belong either to the Zen or to the non-sectarian.

In Zen sect. The Zen sect makes headway in the United States through the work of one Buddhist scholar of this sect,

26 Ibid.
Dr. D. T. Suzuki, who has translated books on Buddhism into English. Besides the point of preference in doctrine, one Caucasian Buddhist priest gave two reasons for the popularity of this sect among Caucasians—that it was due to the availability of books on Zen Buddhism in English and the reaction of the Japanese in other sects toward Caucasians who try to study Buddhism. The Issei misinterpreted the desire of Caucasians to acquire knowledge and did not want to admit them to their temples.  

In non-sectarian. The non-sectarian Buddhism in the United States is really the mixture of the Thera Vada and the Mahayana. The first one was organized by Dwight Goddard of Thetford, Vermont. He had been in Japan studying Buddhism for several years and had become a member of the Shokoku Monastery. In 1934 he decided to come back. He formed a group called "The Followers of Buddha," and established a retreat in Santa Barbara, California. It was not successful and finally dissolved. However, he advocated the Buddhist life to all who would listen, printed and distributed several pamphlets upon the subject. He is known for his two books, The Buddhist Bible and The Buddha's Golden Path.  

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27 Statement by James MacDonough, personal interview, July 8, 1959.
28 The Buddhist Brotherhood in America, 22d cit., p. 65.
Other Caucasian Buddhists formed study groups in several cities: New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Tacoma, and Los Angeles. They used English or German books on Buddhism translated from Pali by English or German scholars who had studied Thera Vada Buddhism. From the view of the doctrine, they can be classified as the Thera Vada Buddhists, although through association with different Japanese sects they added some Mahayana teachings. Among these groups, the prominent one was the Buddhist Brotherhood in America. It was led by the Reverend Julius Goldwater of Los Angeles in 1943. During the evacuation period he had offered to absorb the Young Buddhist Association. Although the YBA had been unwilling to accept affiliation with the Brotherhood, it had a closer informal relationship with the non-sectarian during that period.

The latest organized non-sectarian group is the Universal Buddhist Fellowship. It was originated by the Reverend Leslie Lowe of Los Angeles in 1951. It is also the combination of the Thera Vada and the Mahayana. The Reverend Mr. Lowe observed the teachings of the Thera Vada while he himself had been ordained in the Zen monastery in Japan.

29 Ibid., pp. 65-66.
31 Statement by Leslie Lowe, personal interview, September 2, 1959.
32 Ibid.
Although there are still a few Caucasians in the Shin Sect at the present time, the study group of this sect had started a long time ago. On May 26, 1900, they formed the Three Treasures Society. It was the first Caucasian Buddhist organization in the United States. Some members of this organization were very active and devoted their time to teaching Buddhism to Americans as well as to the American-born Japanese. These people were Sunday School teachers, lecturers at the summer session, and so forth. At the present time there are two Caucasian Buddhist priests of this sect and several active laymen who teach in Sunday Schools and participate in BCA activities.

Relationships among different sects of Buddhism in the United States are not too much in co-ordination. Only in Los Angeles is there a Buddhist Church Federation. Ministers of every sect meet once a month. They joined each other in celebrating important days such as Wesak Day.

33 National Young Buddhist Association, Young Buddhist Handbook, pp. 6-7.
34 The League of YMBA of North America, Dhratri (December 1927), p. 30.
36 Wesak Day is observed by the Thera Vada Buddhists as the day of the birth, enlightenment, and death of Gautama Buddha. In Mahayana, especially the Japanese sects, it is considered as the full moon day; the day of the birth, of the enlightenment and of the death are celebrated separately.
V. TOTAL NUMBER OF BUDDHISTS

The exact figure of the number of Buddhists in the United States at the present time is still unknown. In 1940, the estimated number was 56,000 of which 55,000 were of Japanese ancestry. From the statistics in the *Yearbook of American Churches* at the end of 1954 the Buddhist churches of America have 63,000 people. The Buddhist Churches of America have no assurance that this figure is correct. The only thing that BCA affirms is that it has not lost its members since the starting of the post war period.

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39 Statement by Takashi Tsuji, personal interview, September 14, 1959.
CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has presented the history of Shin Buddhism in the United States which started from 1898 up to the present time (1959). According to the development in its characteristics, it can be divided into three periods: the pre war, the war and post war, and the present time.

The pre war period which started in 1898 lasted to 1942. Shin Buddhism was found only along the Pacific Coast. Its characteristics were that of the Japanese Buddhism. There was a close tie between the North American Buddhist Mission and the main headquarters in Kyoto, Japan. Bishops and ministers were Japanese appointed by the Honpa Hongwanji. They were both the religious leaders and administrators. They were responsible for church finance and everything. Laymen who were in the board of directors of each church usually let them have their own ways. Affiliated organizations were under supervision of ministers who encouraged all kinds of social activities in order to attract young people. Japanese was the only language used in church. However, in the last decade of this period the importance of English was realized. The program for having Nisei ministers had begun.

The second period started with the evacuation of the people of Japanese ancestry in 1942. In the relocation
centers Buddhism received more interest than before. This was due to the fact that people in the centers had nothing to do. They did not have to worry about earning their livings because the War Relocation Authority supported them. They realized that in order to keep Buddhism alive in the United States they had to reorganize and make it more adaptable to American life. Since then the process of Americanization has gone on very fast. In May 1943 the Young Men's Buddhist Association held an inter-project meeting in Salt Lake City. In the next year a new constitution was drawn. In order to make it more attractive to the American-born Japanese, the Nisei representatives revived the national YBA, reconstructed the general church organization, and repudiated any tie with Japan. The bishop and officers at the headquarters in San Francisco, which had as its new name the Buddhist Churches of America, were elected by members of affiliated churches. More English was used in services and printed materials.

At the present time Shin Buddhism in its Americanized form is very much different from the one in Japan. The administration in BCA and local churches is handled in a democratic way. Although BCA is still affiliated with Hompa Hongwanji in Kyoto, it is an independent organization. There are now two ministers' training centers in the United States. The tradition of going to be ordained in the mother temple in Japan is still observed. English has become the language
Looking at the present situation, it seems that Shin Buddhism will continue to be popular among second and third generation Japanese in the United States. However, it is hard to predict that it is going to be as popular among the Caucasians as the Zen sect. The concept of Amida Buddha in the Shin Sect is rather close to the concept of God in Christianity while Zen puts stress on meditation. The question is, which one will attract people's interest more: the thing that is similar to what one already has or the thing that is different? The future of Shin Buddhism among the Caucasians depends upon the answer to this question.
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D. PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Imata, James. Interviewed on November 27, 1959.
He is a Sunday School teacher and a member of Sacramento Buddhist Church.
Low, Leslie. Interviewed on September 2, 1959.
He is a non-sectarian Caucasian Buddhist minister at Los Angeles.

He is a Caucasian minister at Stockton who belongs to the Zen Sect.

He is one of the early ministers who has been in many churches. At present he is the chief minister at Sacramento Buddhist Church.

She is a Sunday School teacher of the Stockton Buddhist Church.

Suzuki, George. Interviewed on October 6, December 8 and 13, 1959. He is one of the early members of the Young Men's Buddhist Association in Stockton. He had been president of the Western Young Adult Buddhist League for three terms. At present he is an officer in the B.C.A. Board of Directors.

Tsuji, Takashi. Interviewed on September 14, 1959.
He is the Director of Department of Buddhist Education at the headquarters of Buddhist Churches of America.

Unno, Taitetsu. Interviewed on September 3, 1959.
He had been an officer in the board of directors at the B.C.A. Study Center in Berkeley. At present he is the minister of the Senshin Buddhist Church in Los Angeles.