

Lighting Up Tendai: Strengthening Sect-Parishioner Bonds Through the Light Up Your Corner Movement

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The Tendai sect is currently engaged in an effort to recreate itself in order to address the needs of contemporary Japanese. The Tendai sect of Japan was founded twelve hundred years ago and is often referred to today as the mother of Japanese Buddhism. However, the Tendai sect, like all the sects of so-called “traditional Buddhism,” faces an uncertain future.¹⁾ Fewer people are opting to join the clergy, and parishioner numbers at many temples are declining. In order to address such issues, the Tendai sect began the Light Up Your Corner Movement (*Ichigu wo Terasu Undō*) in 1969. It is the Tendai sect’s catch-all campaign. It is at once a social welfare movement, a world peace movement, and a method for revitalizing parishioner-temple relations and re-envisioning the role of priests in contemporary Japan. In particular, this paper will focus on the Light Up Your Corner Movement as an effort to revitalize temple bonds with the parishioners.

Tendai seeks to address Japanese citizens through the movement by positing a moral crisis, and by offering the means to overcoming that crisis.

It seems that a day doesn’t pass anymore when there isn’t an article about crime committed by youth staring out at you when you open your newspaper in the morning.²⁾

Books, articles, and speeches by Tendai practitioners over the last 30 years seem to mention invariably how crime is on the rise, the youth are out of control, the country is in danger. Hagami Shōchō, a Tendai ascetic, wrote 30 years ago that Japan was in danger because its youth lacked a moral rudder. A contemporary Tendai leader notes:

Following the war, religion was squeezed out of public education. Under the pretext of “freedom of religion” as proscribed in the constitution, Japan forced the freedom not to believe. The mass media was at the front line of this and debate about religion became viewed as taboo. As a result, ethics and morals were destroyed, and the Japan we see now was born. Ethics and morals without roots in religion are like cut flowers. They may be beautiful to look at but they will soon wilt.³⁾

This statement describes a common vision of contemporary Japan held among Tendai priests.⁴⁾ It is an image of a country floundering because it has no moral base rooted in religion. The Light Up Your Corner Movement was founded thirty years ago in response to this image. At least, that is one possible view, that presented on the homepage and in the literature of the movement last year (1999).

However, stepping back we see another set of images of postwar Japan, images of so-called “traditional Buddhism.” “Traditional Buddhism” confronted many challenges in the postwar period: prewar traditions were questioned, new religions were on the rise, urbanization devastated rural parishioner support, and because its primary role was care for the dead, “traditional Buddhism” became known as “funeral Buddhism.” In addition, negative images of “traditional Buddhism” as mired in outmoded practices, as corrupted by economic necessities (if not greed), and as incapable of addressing the needs of contemporary Japanese society, images that were both popular and scholarly in origin, abounded and continue today. Western scholars described Japanese Buddhism as in decline since the medieval period.⁵⁾ Japanese scholars such as Tamamuro Taijo, who coined the term funeral Buddhism, painted a bleak picture of Buddhism in the early modern and modern periods.⁶⁾ Tamamuro Fumio, in a recent work on parishes and funerals remarks:

Our ancestors had to carry money to the temples even it that meant less food for them to eat. If they refused to donate, they suffered status and religious discrimination.⁷⁾

Popularly aimed books, likewise, painted an almost comical negative picture of modern “traditional Buddhism” (see picture #1). The popular phrase “*bozu marumokē*” reflects the commonly held view that Buddhist priests make excessive amounts of money performing funerals. Moreover, there exists today a strong image of priests as unconcerned with meditative practice, compassionate works, or other “proper” religious activities.

Tendai, and other sects, have been faced with an uphill battle to create positive self-images. The decline in rural parish membership, and the boom in membership in “new” and “new new” religions (*shin shūkyō* and *shin shin shūkyō*), likewise, presented the sects of traditional Buddhism with a challenge. How could they overcome negative images, strengthen parishioner bonds, and recruit new members? In short, how could they survive? It was in response to these pressures, just as it was in response to the vision of crumbling Japanese values, that the Light Up Your Corner Movement was founded.



Picture #1: Popular Image of Priests Today

The Tendai sect was not alone in starting a popularly-focused movement. Between 1962 and 1971 most sects of “traditional Buddhism” began similar movements aimed at refiguring themselves as “people’s organizations” (*minshū kyōdan*). Tendai was comparatively late in organizing its effort. For example, the Sōtō sect began its movement, the Parishioner and Faithful’s Sect Support Association (*Danshinto Shūmon Gojikai*) in 1963, and the Jōdo sect began

its Hand in Hand Movement (*Otetsugi Undō*) in 1966. The appearance of such movements in this period can be linked to the threat of the New Religions boom. However, this period also represents a period of stability for the sects. Economic recovery meant prosperity which translated in to increased donations to temples. With their immediate postwar economic worries in check (i.e. rebuilding of war damaged structures, securing of income for priests), the sects were able to turn their efforts to preaching.⁸⁾ It is arguable that, in order to adapt to postwar conditions, the sects of “traditional Buddhism” also studied the activities of the New Religions, which owed much of their successful recruitment to their popularly aimed movements.

The Light Up Your Corner Movement did not originate from Tendai sect headquarters but from the Tokyo teaching district (*Tokyo kyōku*) as part of the efforts of the Kanshinkyō Area Propagation Teachers Association (*fukyōshi renmei kanshinkyō*). As part of local efforts to celebrate the 1200th anniversary of their founder’s life, members of the Kanshinkyō Area Propagation Teachers Association focused their teaching activities on the slogan, “Light Up Your Corner.” The movement was soon co-opted by the sect and given organizational form on the national level. This resulted in a considerable amount of tension between local movement leaders, especially the those in the Tokyo Teaching District, and the sect. For example, Tokyo movement leaders recall a period early on when there were frequent disagreements with the sect regarding the direction of the movement. Local leaders sought to focus on local needs. Sect leaders, on the other hand, wanted to focus on using the movement to increase sect recognition among members. To that end, the sect used the movement to encourage members to purchase statues of the founder, Dengyō Daishi, to install in their home alters (and thus increase sect awareness), and to sing the sect song. One local leader goes so far as to say that, once the sect took over, the movement underwent a period of institutionalization, which ended in a hollowing out of the original principles.⁹⁾

Perhaps because of this conflict, the movement is without a single readily identifiable focus. On one level it is a public relations movement. The first convention (*taikai*) was held in a public hall. The use of a public space was designed to attract people not already affiliated with Tendai to the movement and, thereby, to the teachings of Tendai. Another aim of appealing to a wider audience was to raise the public image of Tendai, or as one priest said, “image up” Tendai.¹⁰⁾ Although the first such event was deemed a success, later public meetings ran into trouble attracting sustainable crowds. After a dismal showing at the 1976 convention, it was decided the movement should turn inward and focus on the parishioner base.¹¹⁾ Thereafter, a large public meeting was held to appeal to a broader audience once every several years, but in general meetings were focused inward. (see picture #2) Thus, a second way to view the movement is as a method to strengthen parishioner bonds to local temples and the sect. Parishioners were not, however, required to participate in the annual meetings and welfare and environmental programs developed by the movement. Yet, there was pressure on priests to increase local involvement, so many priests registered all of their parishioners and paid the nominal annual fee themselves. Thus, while the movement appeared to be expanding and attracting large numbers of parishioners in support of it, in actuality it may not have been growing much at all. In 1999, on the 30th anniversary of the first convention, a forum was held in Tokyo to discuss the past and consider the future of



Picture #2: A Light Up Your Corner Convention

Priests initiated the movement and it still exists as a platform from which priests may seek involvement in local, national, and international welfare and relief efforts, as well as in propagation. It is also a platform through which the sect encourages priests to increase their involvement in such issues and, thereby, combat the “funeral Buddhism” image of “traditional Buddhism.” Thus, a third way of looking at the movement is as a platform for expanding or re-creating the roles of priests. The leading role played by priests brings to light the professional-laity divide in sects of “traditional Buddhism” such as Tendai. The appeal of many “new” and “new new” religions is that they place a primary focus on the laity, something sects such as Tendai have not been able to replicate. Postwar Tendai efforts to restructure itself, therefore, have been hindered by the professional-laity divide inherent in its institutional structure.

A fourth way of viewing the movement is as a social welfare movement. Movement leaders advocate involvement in society to better self and society. The movement offers volunteer programs to build schools in Laos, to travel to slums in Thailand, to donate cash to UNICEF, and to plant trees on Mt. Hiei (a mountain overlooking Kyoto where the Tendai sect is headquartered). Regional conventions are held annually allowing the sect to bring parishioners together, discuss the year’s accomplishments, and teach members about the “spirit” of Dengyō Daishi (Saichō, 767–822), the founder of Japanese Tendai. (see picture #3)

Indeed, the aims of the movement are as varied as its beginnings as a local effort later co-opted by the sect. One Tendai leader recently wrote, “There is a lot of discussion as to what the movement is about. Is it a service for society? Is it a Tendai sect faith movement? Is it a movement to develop individual character?”¹³⁾ The by-laws of the movement demonstrate the breadth of the movement’s goals: everything from publishing a newsletter to creating a Pure Land. The by-laws read:

the movement. At this meeting the lack of direct parishioner participation in anything other than the conventions was lamented. Future plans now call for increased parishioner involvement in planning and implementation of activities.¹²⁾

Despite efforts to involve parishioners and non-affiliated laity, priests remain the primary participants in the welfare, environmental, and aid activities conducted by the movement.



Picture #3: Speech given before image of Dengyō Daoshi

Purpose: This movement takes as its purpose the actualization of the spirit of the founder Dengyō Daishi, to promote the Light Up Your Corner Movement, to broadly raise the spiritual life of the society, and to build a Buddhist Pure Land. In order to realize its purpose the movement will undertake the following: (1) activities to broadly proclaim the spirit of Dengyō Daishi, (2) the publishing of periodicals and other materials, (3) the holding of conventions, lectures, and study meetings, (4) recognition for those involved, (5) cooperation in world peace and environmental efforts, (6) aid for domestic and foreign disaster and conflict relief, and (7) other activities recognized as contributing to the aims of the movement.¹⁴⁾

The Turn Inward: Focusing on Parishioners

How did the sect, through the Light Up Your Corner Movement, respond to the vision of crumbling Japanese values and the declining future prospects of “traditional Buddhism”? The answer to these questions lies in the Light Up Your Corner Movement’s role in strengthening parishioner bonds with the sect and local temples by offering opportunities for parishioner involvement in sect sponsored activities for bettering society. These activities allow parishioners the opportunity to put into practice the teachings of the sect, or put another way, to learn a way of life based on Tendai teachings. They are drawn, thereby, into a closer relationship with the sect.

The textual source for the movement is taken from by Dengyō Daishi’s “Regulations for Ordinands” (*Sangegakushōshiki*), which is cited on the movement’s homepage and elsewhere.¹⁵⁾

What is the nation’s treasure? The will to enlightenment is the treasure, and one who possesses it is the nation’s treasure. There is an old saying that a string of jewels is not the nation’s treasure, the nation’s treasure is one who lights up his corner.

This is expanded upon on the home page as follows:¹⁶⁾

Money and material assets, these are not the nation’s treasure. The irreplaceable treasures of the nation are those who do their best and brighten the world around themselves, at home, at work, wherever they might be. By giving their all just where they are, the whole of society is made brighter. Seek out joy for the entire human race, not just for yourself. “One who understands the pain of others,” “one who can take pleasure in the joy of others,” “one who is kind, thoughtful and warm hearted,” is the nation’s treasure. This is what [Dengyō Daishi] was saying. If warm hearted people gather we can create a brighter society [*akarui shakai*¹⁷⁾]. The Light Up Your Corner Movement seeks to bring the spirit of Dengyō Daishi alive today. It was founded in 1969 to build a brighter society in which people lift up their hearts and minds to become better human beings. Wherever you are, whatever position you might hold, do your best and shine forth. If you shine, your neighbors, your town, your society will shine, too. By gathering together these points of light, Japan will shine, the world will shine, the whole earth will shine. Light up Your Corner!

Tendai parishioners are asked to embody the teachings of the founder by going out and becoming the nation's treasures through lighting up the world around them. The Light Up Your Corner Movement provides both physical opportunities to do this as well as a wealth of material to support such a way of life, such as inspirational essays and sermons.

The practices and teachings that create a way of viewing the world and acting properly within it are brought together in the Three Practices for families. The Three Practices are “Living in Harmony,” “Service,” and “Life.” The “Three Practices” slogan is a relatively new development. It was created for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the movement.¹⁸⁾ Behind it, however, lies a long history of adapting so-called traditional teachings to a lay audience. The emphasis on the family reflects the desire to cure Japan’s ailing value system by enriching family life, thus saving the “traditional family,” and the desire to strengthen the bonds between families and their temples, thus saving “traditional Buddhism.” (see pictures #4 and #5)

The Three Practices

Helping the environment and thus furthering awareness of the inter-related nature of existence is the theme of the first of the Three Practices, “Living in Harmony.” The core act is reducing the amount of garbage produced at home. The homepage notes:

Fresh air and pure water, the nourishment and natural resources given by the earth, these blessings are the wellspring of life. But, they are not inexhaustible. The increase in waste, especially household waste which is now more than can be disposed of, invites major environmental deterioration. First, we must treat things preciously, and decrease the amount of household waste. Then, we should recycle as much as possible.¹⁹⁾



Picture #4: Three Pillars Flier



Picture #5: Light Up Your Corner Flier

The theme of living in harmony with one's surroundings, of learning not to be wasteful, is closely tied to the vision of postwar Japan as a consumer society run amok. According to this view, the period of high growth led the Japanese to value consumption and comfort over anything else.²⁰⁾ The Tendai sect, through the Light Up Your Corner Movement, seeks to put Japan's value system back on track. For example, often cited is Dengyō Daishi's teaching that "within the will to enlightenment there is food and shelter, but the will to enlightenment does not exist within food and shelter." This statement is interpreted for the people of Japan today to mean that their values are backwards. Within consumerism and mass consumption, one can never find true happiness (enlightenment). However, within the search for true happiness (enlightenment), one's material needs will be met. One way suggested by the movement to realize this is to reduce wasteful consumption, in doing so, it is taught, one's heart and mind become richer.²¹⁾

From recycling at home, the practice points to getting involved in environmental protection projects. The front page of a recent issue of the sect newspaper (*Eizan jihō*) was dedicated to environmental issues. The headlines read, "Times that Question How We Live," and "Changing to a Recycling Society." The way to bring about a recycling society is through the efforts of individuals doing whatever they can within their own limits, i.e. lighting up their own corner of the world.²²⁾ (see picture #6)

Environmental protection became part of special Light Up Your Corner thirtieth anniversary efforts.

Today many of the earth's forests are sending out an SOS. Forests, the source of our water and air, are unquestionably disappearing because of uncontrolled development and logging. As part of its thirtieth anniversary efforts, the Light Up Your Corner Movement is adopting environmental protection as a theme. As the first step, a tree planting effort was undertaken on Mt. Hiei to repair the damage caused in the Saito area by last year's typhoon... The people of developing countries, including we Japanese, in our search for an easy life style, allow the uncontrolled development of forest land thus destroying the delicate balance of nature... We Japanese are world-class wood users and contribute to the destruction of forest lands across [the world]. The Tendai sect began the Light Up Your Corner Movement thirty years ago in 1969 as Japan entered a period of sustained economic growth. Sounding a warning that we had forgotten what true wealth was in our search for material comfort, Tendai called for the creation of a peaceful society and people of heart based on the Light Up Your Corner spirit of Dengyō Daishi, recalling his statement "to forget self and benefit others is the highest



Picture #6: Headlines from *Eizan Jihō* calling for Environmental awareness

form of compassion.²³⁾

The focus of the “Living in Harmony” practice is to learn to recognize that one lives in a dependent relationship with nature. Understanding the dependent nature of one’s existence is “true” wealth. This practice finds its foundation in the teaching that one is given life by all that surrounds one, a core teaching of contemporary Tendai that draws on the Buddhist concept of interdependence.²⁴⁾ Here, the broader Tendai teaching of “Living in Harmony” has been harnessed to the popular contemporary interest in environmentalism to produce a practice that is meaningful to the members, teaches core Tendai concepts, and offers parishioners a way to get involved in society through the Tendai sect.

The second practice is “Service.” This practice centers around service to society, in particular through volunteer activities. An essay entitled “A Sharing Heart” in the sect newspaper posed the question “In this messed up world what can be done to make a bright and peaceful society?”. The answer was found in Dengyō Daishi’s call to forget self and benefit others.²⁵⁾ Movement literature adds:

Volunteering is putting into practice the Buddhist spirit of giving (*fuse*). In order for the world to be at peace, we must think and act from the point of view of the meek. Compassion and thoughtfulness should be nurtured in the household. Families should join their hearts and minds and volunteer as a family. Volunteering enriches the heart and mind of the volunteer.²⁶⁾

The movement provides parishioners with a variety of ways to forget self and benefit others. It also encourages participation in non-sectarian volunteer efforts. The key to “service” is to become involved in society to better it and self. An article in the sect newspaper states:

Try to do your best at those good works that you are able to do. If you fail, reflect on your mistakes and devise [a new approach]. This is the nature of the Light Up Your Corner Movement-individual activities link together to form a large ring. Lighting up a corner leads to lighting up a thousand miles.²⁷⁾

In addition to larger projects, such as participating in school-building efforts in Laos, or aiding in disaster relief around Japan, many smaller activities are encouraged. Whatever the activity, the goal is to not only help others, but to better one’s character. For example, members are encouraged to occasionally skip meals and donate the money saved to help others. The emphasis, however, is not said to be the money, but the act of skipping a meal. Through fasting one learns compassion for the hungry. One also learns discipline if fasting is made a regular practice.²⁸⁾ As one priest notes, “The value of [the term] Light Up Your Corner is that it teaches us to build up good acts one at a time. Social welfare cannot,” he says, “simply be reduced to the giving of material items. It must include the giving of self.” He adds that, “Japanese give money easily, but must learn to give of themselves.”²⁹⁾

The last of the Three Practices is “Life.” What is the practice of life? The movement

literature says the following:

Give thanks that you were born as a human, and wake-up to the fact that you were brought into this life-path passed down from your parents and ancestors. Know the importance of life. For the sake of the children of the future, pass on what our ancestors taught us of how to be virtuous, and rejoice at the birth of new life from the bottom of your heart.³⁰⁾

Kobayashi Ryūshō, the head of Tendai's college on Mt. Hiei, commented that it is important to have as part of one's character the desire to give back the gift of life.

We must keep in mind the importance of maintaining the will to give back the gift of life (*okaeshi no kokoro*). When we wake in the morning, we should face the family Buddhist altar, place one hand to the other, and call to mind the thought of returning the favor [of the gift of life].³¹⁾

Of the three practices this is perhaps the most fundamental. It calls for a return to the corner stone of family religion in Japan - ancestor worship.

I want you to begin by cleaning the household Buddhist altar, and returning the favor [of the gift of life] to your ancestors by giving thanks. That is the spirit of returning the favor, and the foundation of the Light Up Your Corner Movement.³²⁾

Many priests construe ancestor worship as central to the maintenance of "traditional" family structures. However, they claim the traditional family has fallen apart because "postwar education created a spirit of pillaging."³³⁾ Traditional values were discarded in favor of mass consumerism. This "spirit of pillaging," in which individuals seek their own fulfillment without regard for those around them, is at the heart of Japan's current values crisis.

The movement leaders claim the crisis, however, can be overcome through a return to traditional Japanese values.³⁴⁾ One leader claims to have read a survey which showed that were multi-generational families, in which the grandparents prayed regularly before the home Buddhist altar, had less chance of producing problem children. Prayer, he adds, is the foundation of the movement.³⁵⁾ And, the root of prayer, adds another leader, is the ancestors.³⁶⁾ The Three Practices are grounded in the family. And, the family is grounded in the ancestors. If the roots of the family tree are strong, the tree will survive even a typhoon, the family will prosper and society will shine.³⁷⁾ Through paying respect to one's ancestors, one learns to appreciate the gift of life. In learning to appreciate the gift of life, selfish individualism is replaced with the will to return the favor of the gift of life. Thus, it is taught that one has the power to break the chain of individualism and consumerism, in which life is seen as something created by individuals like any other product and not as a precious gift.³⁸⁾ That is the beginning of lighting up one's corner of the world.

A return to the practice of ancestor worship would solve, according to movement leaders, not only Japan's current values crisis, but also the negative image of temple

Buddhism. The “funeral Buddhism” image remains indelible. Parishioners do not know about other temple activities. If parishioners could be brought to the temple and the temple was made a part of everyday life, then Tendai’s image problems would disappear.³⁹⁾ The way to do that is through encouraging respect for the ancestors, which in turn rebuilds the family, which serves to support the temple that brought the family back together and seeks to keep the family together by offering new activities for volunteering together to better society.

Taken together the Three Practices form the foundation for a Tendai based way of life centered on the family. They provided parishioners with the opportunity to become engaged in society and the religious underpinnings for such engagement. Along with other Light Up Your Corner Movement activities such as annual conventions, the Three Practices are part of the Tendai sect’s effort to strengthen parishioner-sect bonds and cure the ailing value system of postwar Japanese society.

Conclusions

There is one possible problem facing movement leaders. Who is actually participating in the movement? As mentioned in the introduction, the movement was founded and is managed by priests. The participation of priests is virtually guaranteed. All Tendai sect affiliated temples are registered as local offices of the movement, and the abbots are required to be the local office leaders. So, at least on a minimal level, all temple abbots are involved. Most of the international volunteer activities, such as building schools in Laos, are staffed not by parishioners, but by priests. Involvement at the local level by parishioners appears to depend significantly on the enthusiasm of the local temple priest. If the priest is able to communicate the need for becoming socially engaged and is able to develop local practices, parishioner interest increases. However, even the most enthusiastic priests must counter long-held images of the temple as a place solely for death rituals and of the priest as interested only in funerals. For example, one priest writes that when he began a stamp collecting drive he met with many early difficulties. The purpose of stamp drives are two-fold. On the one hand, the cutting and sorting of the stamps by parishioners is supposed to be a form of practice (*gyō*). As parishioners cut and sort, they reflect on their own fortunate circumstances and give rise to compassionate thoughts for those less fortunate. On the other hand, the stamps are collected at the temple and sent to the sect headquarters, where they are massed with others and sold. The proceeds are then used for various social welfare programs. The priest was dismayed when one parishioner returned from vacation in Germany with a package of stamps for him. The parishioner said, “I hear you are collecting stamps and thought you might enjoy these.”⁴⁰⁾

The pervasive and central role of priests also brings to light the professional-laity divide in sects of established Buddhism such as Tendai. The appeal of many of the “new” and “new new” Religions is that they place a primary focus on the laity, something sects such as Tendai have not been able to replicate. The professional-laity divide has hindered postwar Tendai efforts to restructure itself and to compete with new religious movements for the hearts and minds of the people. The Light Up Your Corner Movement continues to suffer from this divide. Until parishioners are brought in to management roles in conventions and welfare activities, their enthusiasm and

extent of involvement will, in all likelihood, not increase.

There is some evidence, however, that parishioners are becoming more involved or, at least, that the movement has succeeded in raising parishioner awareness of sect history and teachings and, thereby, drawn parishioners into a closer relationship with the sect. The primary evidence for this is the lasting appeal of the conventions. Regional conventions are held every year in most teaching districts. The conventions regularly bring together several hundred parishioners as well as local temple priests and their wives. At the conventions, attendees sing the sect song and, from the year 2000, the new Light Up Your Corner theme song. They also listen to sermons on Dengyo Daishi's teachings and to the speeches of invited guests.

Yet, after thirty years, the movement's focus still seems to be uncertain. In particular, the sect (national) versus temple (local) division remains strong. One leader writes that too much energy is now focused on projects that send funding up the ladder to the sect to be used for international relief efforts. He argues that, in order to engage the parishioners, the movement should focus on efforts closer to home.⁴¹⁾ Furthermore, he notes, the sect should better inform members concerning how their money is spent, so they do not see their donations as just one more time they have been squeezed for money by their temple.⁴²⁾

While it is arguable that the movement has been at least partially successful in encouraging new forms of parishioner involvement in the sect, in deepening parishioner ties to the sect through conventions, and in teaching a Tendai way of life through the Three Practices, the movement appears to have failed in another of its goals—to bring in new members. By turning inward, it is preaching to the converted. The majority of the parishioners who attend conventions are those already actively involved with their parish temples. In particular, a large portion of the audience is women who are participating as members of their local temple's hymn group. And, yet, this points out the peculiar situation of "traditional Buddhism" today. The parishioners are in need of conversion. They must be converted from their understanding of the temple as a place solely for funeral-specific needs, to active participants in the programs of the sect, and active believers in the teachings of the sect. The Tendai sect, recognizing this need, shifted the Light Up Your Corner Movement's focus from external membership expansion to internal membership conversion. If parishioners can be made members of the faith, it is reasoned, there is hope that they will participate in bettering society, and continue to support their local temples and the sect.

Notes

- 1) The term "traditional Buddhism" (*dentō bukkyō*) refers to those sects of Japanese Buddhism founded prior to the modern period. Another term frequently used to describe the same sects is "established Buddhism" (*kisei bukkyō*).
- 2) Light Up Your Corner Webpage (www.biwa.ne.jp/~ichigu/main/ichigu.html). This homepage has undergone changes and may no longer contain some of this material. Author possesses printouts from Fall 1999.
- 3) Sugitani Gishō, former Director-general of the Tendai sect. "Toward the 30th Anniversary of the Light Up Your Corner Movement: Lamenting Japan's Future," Light Up Your Corner webpage.
- 4) This vision of Japan today is not limited to Tendai priests. It is a common conservative view.
- 5) Earhart, Byron, "The Interpretation of the "New Religions" of Japan as Historical Phenomena," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 37.3 (1969): 237–248. This work by Earhart reflects the nature

of works at the time that the Light Up Your Corner Movement was founded. Earhart divides the history of Japanese religion into three periods: Formative (pre-history to 8th century C.E.), Elaboration (9th to 16th century), and Fossilization (17th century to present). He emphasizes continuity with the past through the terms “enabling conditions” (internal factors) and “precipitory conditions” (external factors). Yet, his periodization eliminates any possibility of contemporary meaning for religions established after the Edo period (1603–1868) and stereotypes the New Religions. In this periodization, New Religions are seen as the result of the search for meaning among the fossils of Buddhism and Shinto in times of spiritual need.

- 6) Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō* (Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku Ltd., 1963).
- 7) Tamamuro Fumio, *Sōshiki to danka*, rekishi bunka raiburari-70 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999), 227.
- 8) Nara Yasuaki, “Haisen kara kyō made no bukkyōkai no ugoki: kisei kyōdan,” in *Gendai bukkyō wo shiru daijiten* (Tokyo: Kinkasha, 1980), 3.
- 9) Ichigū Wo Terasu Undō Tokyo Honbu, ed., *Ichigū wo terasu undō sanjū shūnen kinenshi* (Tokyo: Shōbunsha, 1999): 43. (Hereafter, *Ichigū kinenshi*.)
- 10) *Ibid.*, 37.
- 11) *Ibid.*, 47.
- 12) Here, however, many problems exist. Parishioner leadership roles generally fall to parishioner representatives (*sōdai*, generally an inherited, senior, male position). Parishioner representatives most likely would be selected as representatives to the movement because of their standing at the temple. However, because the parishioner representative position is often inherited, there is some question as to whether any would actively participate. To expand the call to service to include other parishioners might ensure active participation, but would run the risk of upsetting traditional local temple power structures.
- 13) *Eizan jihō*, December 8, 1999, 2. The leader, Kobayashi Ryūshō goes on to conclude that it is, and must be, all of the above.
- 14) Light Up Your Corner By Laws 3 and 4, in *Tendaishū shūkishū* (Tendaishūmuchō, 1994): 961.
- 15) This is a collection of Dengyō Daishi’s petitions to the court to permit Tendai yearly ordinands. For an in depth discussion of the history of this text in English see Paul Sheldon Groner, *Saichō: The Establishment of the Tendai School*, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, vol. 7 (Seoul, Korea: Po Chin Chai Ltd., 1984).
- 16) Light Up Your Corner webpage.
- 17) *Akarui shakai* is the title of Risshō Kōseikai’s popularly aimed movement. The term is popular, and can be seen in city government campaigns as well.
- 18) Light Up Your Corner webpage.
- 19) *Ibid.*
- 20) *Ichigū kinenshi*, 94–95.
- 21) Light Up Your Corner webpage.
- 22) *Eizan jihō*, March 8, 2000, 1.
- 23) *Ibid.*, May 8, 1999, 4.
- 24) This is strikingly similar to the worldview of Japanese New Religions as discussed by Helen Hardacre, Shimazono Susumu, and others. This relationship is discussed in detail in the author’s dissertation, “Living Traditional Buddhism in Contemporary Japan: The Tendai Sect Today,” Princeton University 2001.
- 25) *Eizan jihō*, January 8, 2000, 8.
- 26) Light Up Your Corner webpage and fliers distributed by the movement.
- 27) *Eizan jihō*, May 8, 1999, 3.
- 28) *Kōhō Tendai*, 6 (May 1997), 24–25.
- 29) *Chūgai nippō*, February 19, 2000, 4.
- 30) Light Up Your Corner webpage.
- 31) *Eizan jihō*, November 8, 1999, 4.
- 32) *Ibid.*, March 8, 2000, 4.
- 33) *Ibid.*, December 8, 1999, 4.

- 34) Ibid., April 8, 2000. A leader of the movement tells story of a young woman who went to live with her husband's family in the countryside. The point of the story was that the grandparents, people of an era gone by, teach the young woman how to live properly by always saying thank you, always giving thanks for the food one receives, and always saying the name of the person from whom a gift of food was received to express gratitude before eating it.
- 35) *Ichigū kinenshi*, 98–99.
- 36) Ibid., 102–103.
- 37) Ibid.
- 38) *Eizan jihō*, March 8, 2000, 4.
- 39) Ibid., 5.
- 40) *Ichigū kinenshi*, 59.
- 41) Kimura Shushō, *Ichigū kinenshi*, 54–55.
- 42) A spate of relief efforts, including assistance for the back to back 1999 earthquakes in Taiwan and Turkey, seriously strained the ability of temple priests to solicit donations from parishioners. Relief money is usually generated through a general call for donations from the sect headquarters. Each teaching district is given a target amount to collect, that amount is collected from individual temples within the district. Temples sometimes opt not to press parishioners for donations and make the donation out of operating expenses. This is because, in addition to meeting sect and movement headquarters' demands for donations, temples must also seek donations for their own needs, such as rebuilding halls, etc.