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Sitting In Silence: A Comparison and Analysis of Two Sōtō Zen Institutions in San Francisco

Jake Nagasawa, *University of San Francisco*

ABSTRACT

In this age of globalization—of technological development, transnationalism, and multinational corporations—the truth of interdependence that Buddhism speaks of is evident at every turn. Were it not for international trade and political relations, world travel, modern printing technology, and developments in industrial production, Buddhism may have remained exclusively in Asia or as an immigrant's religion. In this essay, Nagasawa examines the relationship between two Sōtō Zen institutions of San Francisco: the Sōtō Zen Mission of San Francisco, Sōkōji, founded in 1934 by Rev. Hosen Isobe and the San Francisco Zen Center, founded in 1962 by Shunryū Suzuki. Field research and participant-observation lead to the conclusion that, though these two temples are of the same lineage, there is little to suggest a robust relationship between them. Indeed, there is silence between Sōkōji and San Francisco Zen Center, because of differences that extend beyond ethnicity and into the cultural, linguistic, social, and economic.

In this age of globalization—of technological development, transnationalism, and multinational corporations—the truth of interdependence that Buddhism speaks of is evident at every turn. Were it not for international trade and political relations, world travel, modern printing technology, and developments in industrial production, Buddhism may have remained exclusively in Asia or as an immigrant's religion. Buddhism's interaction with the West has helped to shape it both in the West and in Asia. One might even say Buddhism in the West is an outcome of globalization

Buddhism is a relatively new religion to North America. There was some knowledge of Buddhism in America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through the World Parliament of Religions at the Chicago World Exposition in 1893, and much later through the writings of D.T. Suzuki and his contemporaries.¹ However, the most important contributors to Buddhism's introduction to America were the Buddhist groups and institutions founded by immigrant populations from Asia during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly those hailing from Japan and China. White Americans did not begin adopting and practicing Buddhism on a large scale until the Beat and Hippie generations of the 1950's and 1960's respectively.²

The Buddhisms that have been introduced and adopted by predominantly white Americans of the 1950s and 1960s that have survived to the present day are markedly different from their Asian counterparts. In his work *The Making of Buddhist Modernity*, David McMahan articulates a view held by many Westerners (and especially Americans) that Buddhism does not require one to "follow any strict rules; you simply exercise compassion and maintain a peaceful state of mind through meditation. Buddhism values creativity and intuition and is basically compatible with a modern scientific worldview. It is democratic, encourages freedom of thought, and is more of a 'spirituality' than a religion."³ For McMahan, these conceptions of Buddhism in the West, what he collectively refers to

as “Buddhist modernism,” have been shaped not only by Western scholars and practitioners, but also by “Asian reformers educated in both Western and Buddhist thought.”⁴ Teachers whose books and teachings have become popular in the West, such as Daisetz T. Suzuki, Sōen Shaku, and more recently Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, have adapted their message to mesh with Western philosophy and ideas about reason, empiricism, and science. According to McMahan, such a popular Western picture of Buddhism as described above is “neither unambiguously ‘there’ in ancient Buddhist texts and lived traditions nor merely a fantasy of an educated population in the West, an image with no corresponding object.”⁵ The result of such a movement is a Buddhist institution, perhaps run or founded by an ethnically Asian teacher but with white Americans as an overwhelming majority of its membership base that has shifted its focus from traditional ritual practices and beliefs to meditation and the pursuit of enlightenment.⁶

Yet there remain Buddhist institutions founded by Asian immigrants who traveled to America, “in search of jobs, new opportunities and a better future for their family, simply bringing their religion[s] along” with them.⁷ Such institutions act not only as place where religious ideas and practices are transmitted to later generations, but also help to preserve a sense of cultural identity through providing death rituals and becoming gathering places for immigrant communities. Communities of this sort, as Jan Nattier points out in “Landscapes of Buddhist America”, are “almost always deliberately mono-ethnic at the outset.”⁸

In this paper, I will examine the relationship between two Sōtō Zen institutions of San Francisco: the Sōtō Zen Mission of San Francisco, Sōkōji, founded in 1934 by Rev. Hosen Isobe and the San Francisco Zen Center, founded in 1962 by Shunryū Suzuki. My own field research and participant-observation have led me to conclude that, though these two temples are of the same lineage, there is little to suggest a robust relationship between them. Indeed, there is silence between Sōkōji and San Francisco Zen Center, because of differences that extend beyond ethnicity and into the cultural, linguistic, social, and economic. I intend to explore these differences in order to understand this lack of a relationship, and to contribute more generally to the understanding of Buddhism as it grows and takes shape in America. I will provide a brief history of Zen Buddhism’s intrepid history, show the historical relationship between each of these temples, and present my own observations of their respective practices and congregations. I will also provide my own suggestions to these institutions so that they can perhaps come to support one another.

1. Sōtō Zen in Japan and its Migration to San Francisco

Since the earliest centuries of its existence, Buddhism has been a religion on the move and is often thought of as one of the first world religions. It moved from a relatively small area in northern India, traveling along trade routes and transcending state borders. As it moved into different cultures in Asia, Buddhism adapted to each of the culture’s religious expectations, resulting in a multiplicity of Buddhisms, with only loosely related teachings. According to traditional *Chan/Zen* accounts, an eccentric Buddhist teacher by the name of Bodhidharma brought the teachings and practices of *dhyāna* meditation to China from India in the early 4th

century.⁹ *Chan*, an adaptation of *dhyāna*, only began to emerge as an independent school of its own in the early eighth century, coming to prominence during the Song Dynasty as it adapted itself to its new context and gained the support of the state. By the Southern Song period (1127-1279 CE), virtually all of Chinese Buddhism was Chan.¹⁰ It is for this reason that Japanese monks who traveled to China to study at this time found themselves frequently encountering *Chan* monks in important administrative positions of state sponsored temples.

It was this type of prevalent and state-supported Buddhism that Eihei Dōgen, a Japanese Tendai monk at the time, found on his 1223 quest to China in search of a master with whom he felt more compatible. Dōgen found this in Rujing of Mount Tiantong, a Chan monk who emphasized strict discipline and mediation. Upon his return to Japan, Dōgen attracted few disciples and eventually moved out into the countryside to found Eiheiiji, far from the reach and influence of the Tendai establishment in Kyōto. It would not be until after Dōgen's death that the Sōtō sect became one of the largest sects of Buddhism in Japan. Dōgen's disciples and Dharmic descendants were successful in expanding the Sōtō school by adapting it to the needs of the lay people and accommodating other elements of Japanese culture. It managed to incorporate the veneration of popular bodhisattvas and Shinto deities, and opened Buddhist precept ceremonies to all classes of people. Sōtō priests also "attended to such needs as the building of roads and irrigation canals, the curing of diseases, and the extirpation of evil spirits."¹¹

Following the politically and socially tumultuous years of the Kamakura period, and the establishment of the Rinzaï school of Zen as the *de facto* state orthodoxy of the Ashikaga shogunate (1336–1573 CE), Sōtō Zen was confined to the countryside. The Sōtō school established itself in these areas and famously began the tradition of providing Buddhist funerals for the laity. These involved posthumous ordinations, in which the Buddhist precepts and ordination names were administered to the deceased so that they could be given a formal monk's or nun's funeral, complete with the chanting of sutras, burning of incense and a sermon. As William Bodiford points out, "the regional dissemination of Japanese Zen Buddhism, and of the Sōtō school in particular, advanced hand-in-hand with the popularization of Zen funeral services."¹² The popularization of Sōtō Zen in such a way had far-reaching implications, resulting in Japanese Zen's becoming "strongly associated with funeral rites."¹³

The establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate (1600–1868 CE) in the 17th century brought new changes to Japanese Buddhism, including the regulation of "most aspects of the religion, including temple construction, the relationship between main and branch temples, the appointment of abbots, and rules of succession."¹⁴ This period also saw the establishment of the government's grouping of families with local temples as a means of keeping track of the population. Known as the *danka* system, it was, as T. Griffith Foulk observes, responsible for the contemporary affiliations of Japanese families and Buddhist sects.¹⁵ In contemporary Japan, as with temples in the Tokugawa era, patronage of local families, along with the donations that priests receive for the performance of funeral and memorial rituals provide temples with a significant proportion of their annual income.

The first Japanese immigrants sailed to San Francisco in 1869 following the fall of the Tokugawa, and at the beginning of the Meiji period. Just a few years prior,

Commodore Matthew Perry of the United States sailed into Tokyo harbor with his fleet of gunships, forcibly opening the previously reclusive Japan to Western trade and influence. Many Japanese sought new opportunities for education and employment in the United States as Japan faced an economic depression.¹⁶ As more immigrants arrived in San Francisco, they began establishing their own social institutions to support their growing community, with many settling on the outskirts of Chinatown and in the South of Market district. By 1898 San Francisco has become “the headquarters for Buddhist churches and social organizations located throughout the West, including prefectural organizations or *kenjin-kai*, benevolent associations, and newspapers.”¹⁷ After the devastating 1906 earthquake, the Japanese community relocated itself to the Western Addition establishing the first major Japantown of the United States. Because San Francisco was the main port of entry for Japanese immigrants, it had the largest population of Japanese in the US at the time.

By the dawn of the 20th century, the size of the Japanese community had significantly increased. The community then began to face increasingly racist and xenophobic policies of the then San Francisco mayor and future California Senator, James D. Phelan.¹⁸ Japanese American students were forced into their own segregated schools by the city’s Board of Education. As this issue caught the attention of the Japanese government and President Theodore Roosevelt, the city agreed to rescind its policy. However, President Roosevelt then negotiated a curtailment of Japanese immigration with Japan in 1908. This restriction did not include the so-called “picture brides”, many of whom traveled to San Francisco, facilitating the establishment of families and a new generation of native-born Japanese Americans. However, the community faced other new challenges in the form of California’s 1913 Heney-Webb Act which prohibited non-citizens from owning property and the 1927 Immigration Act, which ended immigration from Japan until the 1950’s. It was in this difficult social environment that the Sōtō Zen Mission of San Francisco, Sōkōji first opened its doors in 1934 at 1881 Bush Street in Japantown under the leadership of Rev. Hosen Isobe. In the next decade, Sōkōji managed to survive the World War II years, even though its priest, Daito Suzuki, and many of Sōkōji’s parishioners were sent to Japanese internment camps (a local Hindu group cared for the temple building in their absence).¹⁹ As Sōkōji attempted to stabilize itself in the years after the war, it would soon face a new set of challenging circumstances.

2. Sōkōji and San Francisco Zen Center: A Shared History

According to Buddhist studies scholars Senryō Asai and Duncan Ryūken Williams in their “Japanese Zen in America: Americanizing the Face in the Mirror,” temples like Sōkōji were “established for Japanese American immigrants who had belonged to the Sōtō Zen school in Japan” as “branch temples” of Eihei-ji and Sōjiji.²⁰ Often, these temples closely resemble the *danka* temples of Japan, which focused on providing funeral and memorial rituals to their parishioners and less so, if at all, on meditation. This is the sort of temple that the newly appointed and eager Suzuki Shunryū came to in May of 1959 as the new chief priest. Prior to this, Sōkōji was led by Kato Wako as its interim priest. Buddhism was in vogue because of the countercultural tide of the time and the writings of the aforementioned D.T. Suzuki and Beat poet Alan Watts. Many of Suzuki’s earliest students “came from

the loose subculture of artists, non-conformists, and beatniks in the Bay Area, where interest in Asian thought was high."²¹ Word had spread through San Francisco that a "Zen master" had arrived in San Francisco, attracting the attention of interested Westerners, like Lou and Bill McNeil, Joane Kyger, and Bill Kwong.

Prompted by Kato Wako, Suzuki began giving lectures to the American Academy of Asian Studies at the San Francisco Art Institute, where Kato had once been a faculty member. At these gatherings, Suzuki began teaching zazen to Westerners and eventually invited them to Sōkōji to sit at the temple's morning zazen sessions. Suzuki also began giving Dharma talks in English on Wednesday evenings, and began holding evening zazen sessions followed by *dokusan*, practice meetings with individual students. In Suzuki's biography, David Chadwick implies that as Sōkōji started attracting more and more Western students, Suzuki began organizing much of his time around teaching them and hosting zazen sessions. "A lot of the older members of the congregation resented the growing presence of the non-Japanese in their temple," as they were often disheveled, awkward and, to the Japanese mind, disrespectful. For these older members, zazen was a serious practice meant for monks and priests. Though some, like Suzuki's middle-aged Western women students, got along with the ethnically Japanese members, "there would always be a gap."²²

Suzuki's group of mostly Caucasian practitioners eventually managed to incorporate under the State of California in 1962 as a non-profit organization with the name "Zen Center."²³ Zen Center also began publishing its own newsletter, *Wind Bell*, in December of 1961. During this period, Zen Center only continued to grow, attracting San Francisco's future abbot Richard Baker. Suzuki provided lay ordination to veteran practitioners and sent several students to train in Japanese monasteries. In 1966, Zen Center, still housed in Sōkōji, purchased Tassajara Hot Springs, formally reopening it as Tassajara Zen Mountain Center in July of 1967. Suzuki's time was more so split between his duties as the temple priest of Sōkōji and the needs of his devoted Zen Center students. Finally in 1969, a sudden change occurred:

Abruptly, a demand came from Sokoji's board of directors in the spring of 1969: choose us or them....They no longer wanted a priest with divided loyalties. They wanted Suzuki to stay, but even more they wanted a priest that was theirs... The younger Japanese members were more understanding, but the elders ran Sokoji. He [Suzuki] said that the Issei, the first generation Japanese-Americans, has a Meiji Buddhist approach. They admired the progress of the West, yet clung to a type of Shinto nationalistic Buddhism focused on making offerings to the spirits of the ancestors.²⁴

Following this turn of events, Suzuki resigned from his position as chief priest of Sōkōji. The members of Zen Center had to search for a new building that could house their groups and act as a training monastery. This came in the form of the current building of the San Francisco Zen Center at 300 Page Street in the Lower Haight area of San Francisco.²⁵ Despite the difficulties from being separated from the place in which they had thrived for nearly a decade, the Zen Center continued to expand, setting up satellite groups and zendos across the West Coast. The culmination of Suzuki's mission to plant the seed of the Dharma in the West came with Richard Baker's installation as abbot of the Zen Center on November 21, 1971. Thirteen days later, Suzuki succumbed to the cancer with which he had been diagnosed just one month before.²⁶

The connection between modern Sōtō Zen in America, San Francisco Zen Center, and Sōkōji is a very important one. Many of the most influential American Sōtō teachers today trace their lineage through Suzuki Shunryū, including Zentatsu Richard Baker, Jakusho Bill Kwong, Sojun Mel Weitsman, and Zenkei Blanche Hartman. Today, Sōkōji occupies a different building which was dedicated in 1984 at 1961 Laguna Street, located still in the Japantown neighborhood, quite near the old Sōkōji building. The old building on Bush Street is now owned by Kokoro Assisted Living.²⁷ Though Sōkōji is an important part of the history of the San Francisco Zen Center, I have observed that the two institutions do not have any sort of working relationship, despite the fact that their split took place more than forty years ago. What is it that keeps these two institutions at arms length?

3. Enduring Dualities: Differing Peoples and Practices

The issues between these two institutions extend beyond ethnicity and into cultural, linguistic, social, and economic differences. In “Landscapes of Buddhist America,” Jan Nattier observes that, “some Buddhist organizations that would seem to fall within a single category—for example, the Sōtō Zen Mission in Honolulu and the Diamond Sangha... in the same city—have virtually no common features, and indeed many of the members of the two groups seem blissfully unaware of one another’s existence.”²⁸ While Sōkōji and the San Francisco Zen Center (hereafter SFZC) indeed have an awareness of each other’s existence because of their close proximity and shared history, they nonetheless share few common features and have very little interaction. As Wendy Lewis, a resident practitioner at SFZC and graduate student in Theology at the University of San Francisco points out, “Sōkōji serves the Japanese/Japanese-American community; SFZC members and residents do not, to my knowledge, participate in activities at Sōkōji on any regular basis,” or vice versa.²⁹

There are significant observable differences between the constituencies of these two institutions. Sōkōji is for the most part ethnically homogeneous. All of the chief priests of Sōkōji have been Japanese, and the congregation itself is composed of first, second, and a few third generations Japanese-Americans, as well as a small number of recent immigrants from Japan.³⁰ Interestingly, though the priests and temple members speak English, rituals and the sermons given by the priest afterward are completely in Japanese.³¹ Much of the social interaction at the meals provided after ceremonies are also conducted in Japanese. This differs quite significantly from Asai and Williams’ observation of services at Los Angeles’ Zenshūji, where since 1985, “ceremonies have been performed solely in English.” They do, however, conclude that Japanese language reigns over Japanese culture as “an organizing activity of Japanese American Zen temples.”³²

Sōkōji also hosts cultural activities with some loose connection to Buddhism. This includes the *goeika* group, which sings Zen-inspired hymns in Japanese at services, the monthly sutra transcription group, the bi-weekly tea ceremony class, and the Shorinji Kempo school that holds its practice sessions in Sōkōji’s gathering hall. Asai and Williams correctly assert that, “Japanese culture is so central to Japanese American Zen that even cultural activities with no relationship to Buddhism have become major activities” at temples, specifically citing Sōkōji’s annual food bazaar held in conjunction with the Cherry-Blossom festival every

April.³³ Zazen plays a very minor roll at Sōkōji, with tri-weekly Zazen sessions which attract few, usually non-Japanese practitioners, and one *sesshin* (meditation retreat) in December (this *sesshin* is quite unlike the extended *sesshin* retreats that other Zen institutions hold with meals and lodging provided; it is rather a drop-in *sesshin*, with set sitting periods in the morning and the evening). Sōkōji thus functions as a Japanese community center with its “major activities geared toward the maintenance of community and familial ties through death rites and ‘Japanese culture’ activities,” while also helping to preserve its congregation’s cultural identity.³⁴

By contrast, SFZC, while more racially diverse than Sōkōji, most members are “from white, middle class backgrounds” and are of varying age groups.³⁵ This confirms Nattier’s categorization of such institution as “Elite Buddhist” organizations, wherein members are usually educated, white, and middle-class. Services (including the chanting of sutras) and Dharma talks at SFZC are mostly held in English.³⁶ This has the double function of accommodating its membership and asserting its perceived independence from Japanese cultural influence. SFZC is primarily a training monastery and so has residences for lay and ordained members of the community. The focus on zazen practice is obvious—SFZC holds sittings in the morning and evening during the weekdays, while hosting Dharma talks and lunches on Saturdays. SFZC also sponsors various activities, such as yoga, cooking and calligraphy classes, and self-help and mediation workshops.

The membership structures and outreach of these institutions also differ. Sōkōji asks for a one-time membership fee of \$100 per individual, and a \$150 fee for couples and families. But, as Asai and Williams show in their study, the main source of income for Sōkōji and other temples like it are funeral and memorial service fees, much like their counterparts in Japan.³⁷ SFZC has varying levels of membership, from \$150 to \$1200 per year, with corresponding levels of membership benefits, such as discounts at the bookstore, subscriptions to the *Wind Bell*, and discount for SFZC’s classes and events. While Sōkōji has a simple website with little basic information or background and no recent updates, SFZC has a sophisticated website that has the daily schedule, a running calendar of monthly events, profiles of prominent figures in the community, and links to other affiliated organizations.

These differences between Sōkōji and SFZC seem to be a prominent barrier in the development of amicable relations. Rick Fields argues that much of the split between Asian and white Buddhist groups no doubt stems “from the natural ethnic fellowship of an immigrant community in which Buddhist temples have functioned as cultural and community centers above all else.”³⁸ Additionally, in temples where activities are conducted in an Asian language, “many white Buddhists are reminded of the empty and yet requited religious rituals of their childhood...” as might have been the case for those who grew up with the pre-Vatican II Council Catholic Church, during which time, liturgies were conducted in Latin.³⁹

Either group also usually approaches Buddhism in different ways. Most ethnically Asian Buddhists receive it as part of their own cultural and familial traditions, while many but not all white Buddhists choose to convert because of some disenchantment with the religion in which they were raised. Thus, “unlike the Euro-American Zen center, that focus on the study of Buddhism and the practice of

meditation, Japanese Zen temples revolve around death rights and cultural activities."⁴⁰ Furthermore, because of the patronage of the relatively well-to-do, white, racial majority, an organization like SFZC has the economic and social means to support the rest of its membership as well as several affiliate centers, like Tassajara and Green Gulch. While acting as a regularly functioning Zen monastery, Tassajara is also open to the public during the summer months for its regular "Guest Session." During these sessions Tassajara becomes something of a Zen "resort." Guests pay a nightly fee for room and board (plus extra fees for retreats) and may also participate in various planned activities including sitting sessions, dharma talks, and various other classes. Other accommodations include use of Tassajara's hot spring and swimming pool facilities as well as hiking trails on the monastery property.⁴¹

SFZC also faced a number of financial and sexual scandals in the 1980s, stigmatizing SFZC in the general Buddhist community.⁴² Add to this the experiences of racism and isolation that many of the older generation Japanese Americans experienced between the 1920s and 1950s, and the already existing split between the Japanese Americans of Sōkōji and Zen Center over Suzuki, it becomes obvious that the subtle conflict between Sōkōji and SFZC is quite complex.

Conclusion

Despite the differences explored above, I think that it is imperative for the survival and development of Buddhism generally, and Sōtō Zen particularly, that institutions like Sōkōji and SFZC work together in this crucial period as Buddhism and religions struggle to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world. As human societies continue to become more interdependent through the power of ever improving technology, the infiltration of capitalist values in all spheres, and as new social and political situations arise, Buddhism can become a fresh voice in the public sphere. Before this can happen, however, Buddhists must come together and overcome their sectarian, ethnic, and cultural biases. Sōkōji, with its rapidly aging *nissei* parishioner base, should reach out to other areas and peoples in order to keep itself afloat as it faces current challenging economic times. It should attempt to accept its neighbors down the street, the San Francisco Zen Center, and look to their creative programs for inspiration, perhaps boosting Sōkōji's membership base with newer, younger members and helping it to become more socially active. San Francisco Zen Center should reconcile itself with Sōkōji, embracing it as an important part of their history and of the history of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in America. Were it not for Sōkōji's presence and the early support the institution itself and the congregation it provided, SFZC and all of its descendant organizations—Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, Green Gulch, Berkeley Zen Center, Sonoma Mountain Zen Center and many more—may never have come to fruition. SFZC can try to network with Sōkōji, aid it in developing more outreach programs, and encourage its members to attend Sōkōji's services or zazen sessions as a show of support. Sōkōji and SFZC are inevitably related and should try to foster a new relationship, breaking their long-time silence, so that together, they can become more of a presence in the greater San Francisco community.

In light of the interesting dynamics between Sōkōji and SFZC, the way Buddhism in America is studied should also be reformed, or at least rethought. It is

important in the study of a Euro-American Sōtō Zen institution, to refer back to its Asian/Asian-American roots, and to always consider ethnic Buddhist temples as important contributors to the developing of an American Buddhism. Perhaps future studies of Buddhism in America could include inter-sect comparisons, showing the differing approaches of, for example, an American Vajrayana center and an American Zen center like SFZC. I also suggest the inclusion of inter-religious comparison, to show how, say, an ethnic Buddhist temple like Sōkōji functions in contrast to a Russian Orthodox Church run mostly by Russian immigrants.

Buddhism in Asia enjoyed the patronage of the aristocracy and the state, facilitating the politicization of Buddhism and aiding its propagation through the development of Buddhist social and educational institutions. As Buddhism moved and took root in America, its practitioners had to change and make adjustments in light of modernity, democracy and capitalism. Buddhism in America has been and continues to be shaped by globalizing forces and thus is also changing. The phenomenon of Buddhism in America, particularly Japanese Zen Buddhism in America, is still an emerging one with a hopeful but uncertain future.

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1. For example, Suzuki, D.T. *Zen and Japanese Culture*, (New York: Bollingen/Princeton University Press), 1970.

2. Yanagawa, Keiichi, "Japanese Buddhism in America," in *Japanese Religions in California*, ed. Keiichi Yanagawa, (Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1983), 10-12.
3. David McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.
4. Ibid. 6.
5. Ibid. 5.
6. Rick Fields, "Divided Dharma: White Buddhists, Ethnic Buddhists and Racism," in *The Faces of Buddhism in America*, ed. Charles S. Prebish and Keith Tanaka (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 197. Jan Nattier also makes this clear in her "Landscape of Buddhist America," cited below.
7. Jan Nattier, "Landscape of Buddhist America," in *The Faces of Buddhism in America*, ed. Charles S. Prebish and Keith Tanaka (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 190.
8. Ibid, 190.
9. Chan is the original Chinese name for Zen, said to be a translation of the Sanskrit *dhyāna*, meaning meditation.
10. Philip Yampolsky, "The Development of Japanese Zen," in *Zen: Tradition and Transition*, ed. Kenneth Kraft, (New York: Grove Press, 1988), 140.
11. Ibid, 146.
12. William M. Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), 185.
13. Ibid.
14. Yampolsky, 154.
15. T. Griffith Foulk, "The Zen Institution in Modern Japan," in *Zen: Tradition and Transition*, ed. Kenneth Kraft, (New York: Grove Press, 1988), 157.
16. The Japantown Taskforce, Inc, *Images of America: San Francisco's Japantown*, (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), 7.
17. Ibid.
18. Senator Phelan is in fact a graduate of the University of San Francisco, then known as St. Ignatius College. He lends his name to one of the dormitory halls on the University's present day campus.
19. David Chadwick, *Crooked Cucumber*, New York: Broadway Books, 1999, 177.
20. Senryō Asai and Duncan Ryūken Williams, "Japanese American Zen Temples: Cultural Identity and Economics," in *American Buddhism*, ed. Duncan Ryūken Williams and Christopher S. Queen, (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 1999), 21.
21. Chadwick, 172.
22. Ibid, 195.
23. Ibid, 226.
24. Ibid, 326.
25. The connection between Sōtō Zen in San Francisco and the Jewish community is interesting. As mentioned before, the original Sōkōji building at 1881 Bush Street was formerly a Jewish Synagogue, while the San Francisco Zen Center's City Center building used to be a Jewish women's residence.
26. Chadwick, 390-414.
27. The Japantown Taskforce, 100.
28. Nattier, 190.
29. Wendy Lewis, email message to the author, May 12, 2011.

30. For a list of Sōkōji's Chief priests, see: "Soto Mission of San Francisco, Sokoji," Soto Zen International, last modified February 19, 2009, <http://soto-zen.net/wiki/wiki.cgi?page=Soto+Mission+of+San+Francisco%2C+Sokoji>.
31. As part of my field research, I have incorporated observations made over the last three years at Sōkōji with more recent interactions at various ceremonies and events, including the annual Hanamatsuri service honoring the Buddha's birth on April 3, 2011. It began with a recitation of the Heart Sutra, followed by a goeika performance. There were other sutras chanted, including a chapter from the Lotus Sutra, and an excerpt of from the writing of Eihei Dōgen. The main part of the ceremony was the ritual bathing of the baby Buddha in sweet tea. Each member of the community went to the front of the temple, where a small pavilion stood. In the pavilion, was a bowl, inside of which was a standing statue of the baby Buddha and sweet tea. Each parishioner would then pour tea three times over the baby Buddha, bow, and then offer incense. Following the service was a light potluck lunch provided by the congregation of assorted Japanese foods, and a small drink of the blessed sweet tea from the bathing.
32. Asai and Williams, 26.
33. Ibid, 27.
34. Ibid, 20.
35. Lewis, May 12, 2011.
36. I also attended and participated in San Francisco Zen Center's version of the commemoration of Buddha's birth on April 10, 2011. While SFZC's ceremony preserved the pouring of sweet tea over a statue of the baby Buddha, it was held outdoors in Koshland Park, which is across the street from the SFZC. Only the presiding priest of SFZC burned incense before a make-shift altar, while the 50+ in attendance chanted the Heart Sutra several times in English. SFZC also provided a birthday cake for Buddha, which was placed in the aforementioned make-shift altar.
37. Asai and Williams, 25.
38. Fields, 203.
39. Ibid.
40. Asai and Williams, 28.
41. San Francisco Zen Center. "Guest Season." Accessed October 10, 2011. <http://www.sfzc.org/tassajara/display.asp?catid=4,19>
42. For detailed account and analysis of these scandals involving SFZC's former abbot Richard Baker, see: Downing, Michael. *Shoes Outside the Door: Desire, Devotion and Excess at San Francisco Zen Center*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2001.

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