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AN ACCULTURATION STUDY OF JAPANESE-AMERICAN  
BUDDHISTS IN NORTHERN UTAH

by

Priscilla Tomich Timper

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Sociology

Approved:

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

1971

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Priscilla Tomich Timper

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## ABSTRACT

An Acculturation Study of Japanese-American  
Buddhists in Northern Utah

by

Priscilla T. Timper, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1971

Major Professor: Dr. Gordon N. Keller  
Department: Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology

The primary purpose of this study was to present a sociological analysis of American Buddhism in northern Utah. Specifically, the analysis covered the acculturation changes of American Buddhism in X\_\_\_\_, Utah, the functions of the acculturation changes, and the effects of secularization on the Buddhists.

The findings were as follows:

1. Buddhism in X\_\_\_\_ is becoming "American Buddhism" just as Buddhism in Japan became Japanese Buddhism.
2. Buddhism in X\_\_\_\_ reinforces the norms and values of the X\_\_\_\_ society but also puts a strain on social relationships by contributing to ethnocentrism and racial segregation.
3. The Buddhist society in X\_\_\_\_ has become more secular and, as a consequence of the secularization process, could cease to exist in the future.

(82 pages)

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Sociology of religion

Religion appears to be a somewhat neglected area of study in sociology. It has not reached the theoretical and empirical sophistication of such areas as stratification, demography, and formal organizations (Smelser and Davis, 1969). Yet, reasons as to why it has remained undeveloped are only speculative. The subject matter or religion itself certainly does not suggest that religion is unimportant in social behavior. Quite to the contrary, religion is accepted as a very influential determinant of social behavior. Thus, the lack of enthusiasm with regard to the sociology of religion is difficult to explain.

Statement of the problem

Despite the tendency of the sociology of religion to remain at a low ebb, the study of religion has not been an entirely ignored area. The literature abounds in descriptive studies about the religious behavior of Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. One aspect of religion, however, that has received only slight attention is the American version of Buddhism. There are, of course, studies on the social implications of Buddhism in eastern cultures, but little research has been done on the unique adaptation of Buddhism to western culture. This apparent discrimination is puzzling when one considers that

there are numerous studies on the Japanese-Americans, the main adherents of the Buddhist faith in America.

Due to the minimal amount of research on American Buddhism, the purpose of this study is to extend the field of knowledge in this area. To accomplish this goal, the Japanese-American members of the X\_\_\_\_ Buddhist Church in northern Utah have been selected as the subjects of this study.

### Objectives

The three objectives of this study are: (1) to give a description of Buddhism in modern Japan, (2) to give a description of the Buddhist religion as adhered to by the members of the X\_\_\_\_ Church in Utah, and (3) to present a sociological interpretation of American Buddhism.

In more specific terms, the first objective of this study is to set down the various aspects of the Buddhist religion in the life of the Japanese Buddhists. This description will be obtained from the literature and will be used as a foundation for the analysis of the Buddhist religion in X\_\_\_\_, Utah.

The second objective is to offer a general descriptive account of the core religious beliefs of the members of the X\_\_\_\_ Church and of the social structure of the said church. This information will be obtained through field research.

The last objective of this study is to give a sociological analysis of American Buddhism. This analysis will cover three parts. First, it will analyze the acculturation process of American Buddhism. It will seek to show in what ways Buddhism has adapted to the beliefs and practices of

American culture. The second part will attempt to determine what sociological functions these acculturation changes serve for the society as a whole. It will consider both the functional and dysfunctional elements of American Buddhism. Finally, the third part will look at the effect of secularization on the Buddhist society in X\_\_\_\_, Utah. Any ethnic group undergoing acculturation in America must in some way respond to the increasing secularization of American society. An attempt will be made, therefore, to determine what the response of the Buddhist society in X\_\_\_\_, Utah has been in connection with the secularization process.

#### Setting

The X\_\_\_\_, Utah area in which this study took place is in Box Elder County. Box Elder County is situated in northern Utah and is, according to the 1970 Utah Population Census, some 5,600 square miles in total area with a population of approximately 28,000 people. The inhabitants of Box Elder County are chiefly Caucasians with about 600 Indians and approximately 400 Japanese-Americans, according to the 1960 Utah Population Census. The county is primarily rural and is most heavily populated on its eastern side.

X\_\_\_\_, Utah itself is a small town with about 650 inhabitants, according to the 1970 Utah Population Census. It sits against a high mountain range and is ten miles from one of the larger cities in Box Elder County. In X\_\_\_\_ there is a school, a few stores, a service station, a post office, a Mormon Church, and a Buddhist Church located a few miles outside of the town.

The inhabitants of X\_\_\_ are primarily Caucasians and Japanese-Americans. However, the ratio of Japanese-Americans to Caucasians in the area is about 1 to 10. The Caucasians were the first to settle in the X\_\_\_ area in the 1860's or thereabouts, and the Japanese-Americans settled there in the early 1900's. The Caucasians are principally of the Mormon faith and the Japanese-Americans of the Buddhist faith. Both groups are intermingled throughout the X\_\_\_ area. They also both are engaged in agriculture for their livelihoods with an emphasis in dairying, raising cattle, and growing tomatoes, sugar beets, cherries, and other produce on irrigated plots of land.

#### Definition of terms

Sūtras. These are the narrative parts of the Buddhist scriptures in which the gospels of the Buddha are contained.

Siddhārtha. This is the name given to the historical Buddha at his birth and means "Goal Reached."

Issei. The Issei are the Japanese immigrants in the United States.

Nisei. The Nisei are the native-born citizens in the United States whose parents are Issei.

Sansei. The Sansei are the native-born citizens in the United States whose parents are Nisei.

#### Limitations

It is to be noted that the above study is exploratory in nature. It does not pretend to reach the statistical precision of quantitative analysis. It does,

however, purport to present a qualitative analysis of an area of religious behavior that has been neglected and little understood in American culture.

## CHAPTER II

## BUDDHISM

Introduction

Buddhism, as one of the great religions of the world, has existed for 2,500 years. In the past it was tremendously important as an agent of civilization in the Far East. It has been credited with influencing the Tang Dynasty culture of China in the Seventh to Tenth centuries A.D., as well as bringing civilization to Japan. Today Buddhism has perhaps nearly half a billion people adhering to its rational doctrine of human conduct. It can be found predominantly in such countries as Burma, Thailand, Tibet, Cambodia, Laos, and Ceylon (World's Great Religions, 1963).

Founder of Buddhism

The founder of Buddhism, Siddhārtha Gautama, was born in 563 B.C. near the border of India at Lumbini in what is now called Nepal. He was the son of an aristocratic Hindu chieftain of the warrior caste. As the son and heir of a Hindu chieftain, Gautama was reared in elegance with his every material need met. At 19, in an archery contest, he won the hand of a wife who bore him a son.

In spite of the luxurious life that Gautama lived, he was not happy. Against his father's orders that he remain in his palaces, he rode out into the world. For the first time, he observed human suffering and returned home



disturbed. Then one night he left his wife and son with the determination to unfold the mystery of life for himself and others.

Gautama was 29 when he began his search for the mystery of life. For six years he lived among ascetics and hermits and tried to attain the secret of Enlightenment or a solution to the mystery of life. He tried various methods of meditation and self-mortification but with no success. Finally, he sat himself under a Bodhi Tree to think and vowed he would not move until he had gained Enlightenment. It was here, after 49 days of meditation, that Gautama achieved Enlightenment and was from that time on to be known as the Buddha or "the Enlightened one."

Having acquired a deep spiritual insight into the nature of existence, Gautama spent the remaining 45 years of his life preaching and converting people to his religion in northern India. He died at the age of 80.

#### Teachings of Buddha

To better comprehend the teachings of the Buddha, learned through his Enlightenment, it should be understood that Gautama was born a Hindu. Hence, Buddhism is actually a revolt against orthodox Hinduism. Buddha, however, did not reject all the concepts of Hinduism, which is evident in the doctrine of karma and the cosmic law of cause and effect. He did, however, disagree with the self-mortification practices of the ascetics and preferred to this the Middle Way between asceticism and self-indulgence. He believed the wise man avoided extremes. Also, he did not accept the Hindu caste system, as he believed all men to be equal in spiritual potentiality.

The core of Gautama's teachings can be found in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path, both of which formed the subject of his first sermon. Briefly, the truths, which embody the main of Buddhist doctrine, deal with the cause and cure of human suffering. The path, on the other hand, describes the type of behavior necessary to eliminate suffering.

The Four Noble Truths are as follows: (1) Suffering is inescapable; (2) Thirst or appetite is the cause of suffering; (3) The cessation of suffering is the complete cessation of this thirst; and (4) The elimination of this thirst is by following the Eightfold Noble Path (Tsuji, T., n.d.).

The Eightfold Noble Path is: (1) right views, (2) right aspirations, (3) right speech, (4) right conduct, (5) right livelihood, (6) right effort, (7) right mindfulness, and (8) right meditation (Tsuji, T., n.d.).

Other aspects of the doctrine of Buddhism include the theory of God, the nature of existence, karma, Nirvana, and Bodhisattva.

Buddhism does not deny the existence of God. The Buddhist God, however, is perceived as an impersonal ultimate reality. Furthermore, man is believed to be incapable of defining what this ultimate reality is.

The nature of existence can be explained by defining the following terms: impermanence (Anitya), suffering (Dukha), and egolessness (Anatman). Impermanence means that nothing remains the same; everything is in constant motion. This is a law of the universe. Suffering is derived from the desire for pleasure. Man, however, can eradicate this desire by his own efforts and thus obtain absolute peace or nirvana. The following of the Eightfold Noble Path is the means by which this can be done. The doctrine of egolessness states that

man does not have a distinct existence. Man is not a permanent entity. He does not have a soul that exists apart from the body. The Buddhist soul is rather a "life force" which unifies all animate and inanimate objects in the universe. The "oneness of life" doctrine of Buddhism is derived from this idea (Tsuji, T., n.d.).

Karma has to do with the law of cause and effect. Man is thought to be the cause of his own destiny and free to determine his future actions (Tsuji, T., n.d.).

The highest good for all Buddhists is Nirvana. In its literal translation, Nirvana means the extinction of desire. The extinction of desire brings peace. Nirvana is furthermore not a physical place but a state of highest consciousness (Tsuji, T., n.d.).

The individual in search of Buddhahood or Enlightenment is called a Bodhisattva. He is the person always willing to give up his own salvation for others. He seeks to increase his virtue and wisdom as well as that of others. To do this he devotes himself to the practice of the Six-Perfections--Giving, Morality, Endurance, Effort, Meditation, and Wisdom (Tsuji, T., n.d.).

As Buddhism spread, two doctrines of the teachings of Gautama arose. Hinayana Buddhism (the Lesser Vehicle), as practiced in southern Asia, stresses the teachings of Gautama in its pure form. Mahayana Buddhism (the Greater Vehicle), as found in China, Japan, Korea, Tibet, and Mongolia, is an elaboration of Gautama's teachings and has tended to adapt to foreign beliefs.

Introduction of Buddhism to Japan

One thousand years were to pass from the founding of Buddhism before Mahayana Buddhism was to be introduced into Japan in the sixth century A. D. by route of Korea. Korea at this time was divided into three principle states: Koguryo, Paikche, and Silla. Koguryo had accepted Buddhism in 372 A. D., Paikche around 384 and Silla much later. In the middle of the sixth century, however, the relations between the three states in Korea had become strained. Hence, in fear of the possibility of an alliance being formed against him, the Paikche king commanded that a sixteen-foot high statue of the Buddha be made and offered to the Japanese emperor. There is no evidence as to whether the statue was actually sent to Japan but nevertheless, another political-religious mission was dispatched in 552. This time the Paikche king notified the Japanese emperor of the combined menace of Silla and Koguryo and requested Japanese troops. The Japanese emperor replied favorably; and as a result, the Paikche king sent an image of the historical Buddha in gold, silver, and copper as well as banners, umbrellas, and Buddhist sūtras. Thus, behind political motivations, Buddhism made its entrance into Japan.

Buddhism was not at first wholeheartedly accepted in Japan. Opinions were divided as to what to do with the epistle and religious gifts sent by the Paikche king. A decision was finally made to approve the new worship as a temporary experiment. The Soga, a powerful family at the time and on the side of the new religion, carried out the experiment and opened a temple. A pestilence broke out, however; and the Mononobe and Nakatomi, two powerful

families against Buddhism, blamed the pestilence on the presence of the Buddha figure ( a result of the displeasure of the native gods) and destroyed the temple.

Although Buddhism suffered initial setbacks, it continued to grow stronger in Japan. A temple was erected in 574 by Soga no Umako, the son of the Emperor Bidatsu (572-585). The Soga family, therefore, again had a place of worship; but another pestilence was to break out. This time, however, the plague grew worse and the belief spread that the Buddha image was not at fault but that the plague was the result of the rejection of the image. The Sogas were then allowed to practice the religion as a family cult, and Buddhism became established in Japan.

The reign of Suiko (592-628) marks a peak in the development of Buddhism in Japan. Suiko was a devout Buddhist and her nephew, The Imperial Prince Shōtoku (573-621) and a member of the Soga clan, is considered to be the founder of Japanese Buddhism. Under him, as appointed regent when Suiko took the vows of a Buddhist nun, Buddhism flourished; and temples and images were constructed. By 623 there were approximately 46 Buddhist temples, 816 priests, and 569 nuns in Japan (Saunders, 1964).

#### Introduction of Japanese Buddhism to America

After the introduction of Buddhism to Japan and its establishment as one of the major religions of Japan, Buddhism was to take another step. This step was due to the immigration of the Japanese to America in the years 1890-1924.

The Jōdo Shin (Shinshū) movement of Buddhism began in San Francisco with the arrival of two priests from Japan on July 6, 1898. Their arrival was to make initial surveys into the possibility of establishing Buddhist congregations. As a result, two learned scholars arrived in San Francisco as the first official missionaries to the United States on September 1, 1899 (Tsuji, K. n .d. ). In 1905 the first Buddhist temple was consecrated in San Francisco; and The Buddhist Mission of North America, which began in 1898 with the first two Buddhist priests, was incorporated in 1942 as the Buddhist Churches of America (Mead, 1965).

CHAPTER III  
REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND  
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Acculturation

The use of the term acculturation within the field of the social sciences originated in the 1880's without a formal definition. Consequently, when acculturation emerged as a significant area of study in the writings of such North Americans as W. H. Holmes, Franz Boas, and W. J. McGee, it was not used "to name the same phenomena." (Spicer, 1968, p. 21) It was not until 1935, therefore, before a formal definition of acculturation was to be established by the subcommittee on Acculturation appointed by the Social Science Research Council.

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups. (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits, 1936, p. 149)

The committee also added a note to this definition which is essential to an understanding of acculturation.

Under this definition, acculturation is to be distinguished from culture-change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation. It is also to be differentiated from diffusion, which, while occurring in all instances of acculturation, is not only a phenomenon which frequently takes place without the occurrence of the type of contact between peoples specified in the definition given above, but also constitutes only one aspect of the process of acculturation. (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits, 1936, p. 149)

Linton (1940), in Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes, devotes three chapters to the acculturation process. To begin, he makes it quite clear that, under the definition of acculturation given by the Social Science Research Council in 1935, "acculturation must include the general processes operative in all cases of group contact and culture change." (Linton, 1940, p. 501) He then proceeds to group the phenomena of continuous first hand contact to which the term acculturation generally refers. He lists most of the phenomena occurring under these conditions as being of either directed culture change or social-cultural fusion.

Directed culture change refers "to those situations in which one of the groups in contact interferes actively and purposefully with the culture of the other." (Linton, 1940, p. 502) The process involved in this situation is one of dominance and submission. The dominant group, by demanding submission, actually modifies and controls its own environment. What eventually happens in an acculturation process of this sort depends on the conditions of contact.

If the dominance is of a purely social and psychological sort, not backed by force of arms, the only method available is that of persuasion backed by prestige. This may often be fairly effective. If, on the other hand, the dominance is of a practical sort, the inferior group being subjects, cultural changes can be enforced by active punitive measures. (Linton, 1940, p. 504)

Social-cultural fusion, on the other hand, applies "to those situations in which two originally distinct cultures and societies fuse to produce a single homogeneous culture and society." (Linton, 1940, p. 502) Fusion, however, need not always develop. Societies in first hand contact can exist side by side and not fuse. In cases such as these, psychological factors usually act as



barriers to fusion; and the groups in contact can both be viewed as quite secure and convinced of their superiority. It is, therefore, with an "inferior group" that fusion is most apt to come about. However, even when a group desires to completely identify with another group and has even assumed the language and habits of the other group, fusion can still be delayed by racial differences. Such differences make it easy for the "superior group" to keep the "inferior group" at a low social status.

The Ways of Men, by John P. Gillin (1948), includes a well-organized account of the acculturation process. Diffusion, first of all, is distinguished from acculturation in that it "may take place without direct or long-continued primary contact between the cultures involved," whereas acculturation involves "continued and relatively close contact between societies." (Gillin, 1948, pp. 555-557) Acculturation is further viewed as consisting of a balanced type and an unbalanced type, a dichotomy quite similar to that of Linton. In the balanced type "the introduction of items from one to the other and the resultant modification of the cultures flows in both directions at approximately an equal rate." (Gillin, 1948, p. 557) In the unbalanced type a stronger society dominates a weaker society, and acculturation is not a mutual process.

Gillin also specifies the ways in which acculturation may alter a situation.

They are as follows:

- (1) Conditions of the natural environment may be changed and old practices may not be rewarding.
- (2) Social conditions can change.

(3) Cultural conditions can change.

(4) Changes can take place in the genetic character of the population.

The acculturation process also offers a confused period or a period of instability. If the situation continues to be unstable, however, acculturation could go on indefinitely. It is more common, though, that one of the following processes will occur. First, "a stabilized symbiotic relationship may develop in which the two cultures maintain their separate identities which continue to operate parallel to each other" but in which the continued "operation of the one culture is necessary for the operation of the other." (Gillin, 1948, p. 567) In another situation a stronger culture may completely eradicate a weaker culture without absorbing any significant elements. Third, one culture may be eventually assimilated into the other and thus lose its identity. Lastly, assimilation is often blocked when different physical types are present in the two cultures.

Although the above account seems to have adequately dealt with the acculturation process, a further clarification should be made with respect to the relationship between acculturation and assimilation. This distinction is pertinent when one considers that social scientists have not been in agreement with respect to the meanings of these two terms. Some have used them as synonyms and others have differentiated between them. This paper will differentiate between them as Gillin and Gillin (1942) do in An Introduction to Sociology. By acculturation they mean "the process whereby societies of different cultures are modified through fairly close and long-continued contact, but without a complete blending of the two cultures." (Gillin and Gillin, 1942, p. 672) Assimilation, on the other hand, "is the process whereby groups with

different cultures come to share a common culture, composed of elements from both but different from either--different because in adopting elements from one culture into another changes in both form and meaning are often necessary. "

(Gillin and Gillin, 1942, p. 673-675)

In summary, acculturation can be defined as the general concept for the processes of change or the results of such processes that occur when two distinct cultures come into continuous first hand contact. To better comprehend this definition, acculturation should also be distinguished from the processes of cultural change, assimilation, and diffusion. First acculturation is only one aspect of cultural change and includes the processes operative in all instances of cultural change. Second, assimilation is only one phase of acculturation--the process in which two original cultures synthesize and come to share a "new" culture. Finally, the diffusion process is similar to the acculturation process in that it involves the exchange of cultural traits but different in that this exchange need not necessarily involve continuous first hand contact. It can be said, therefore, that the term acculturation refers to the processes occurring in the following two situations. In the first situation, there is the domination of one culture by another, and acculturation is predominantly one-sided. In the second situation, there is a tendency for the cultures to fuse together into a "new culture." When two such cultures become completely fused, assimilation is said to have taken place. Although the acculturation process can terminate in the assimilation of two distinct cultures, this is not always the case. Rather, some type of workable compromise between the two cultures generally develops.

### Acculturation and Buddhism

The Buddhist religion is a product of Eastern cultures. Hence, its introduction to America necessarily involves an acculturation process. That a study of this acculturation process could be a worthwhile endeavor is supported by Robert F. Spencer in his article on the social structure of the American Buddhist Church. He says:

The processes of acculturation, the noteworthy changes which took place with regard to church organization and ritual, individual belief, social attitudes, and the like, are implicit in any analysis of Japanese Buddhism in America. (Spencer, 1948, p. 281)

It would appear from the literature, however, that such a study has not been conducted. This conclusion would seem to be backed by Leonard D. Cain Jr.'s (1962) prospectus for research entitled "Japanese-American Protestants: Acculturation and Assimilation." He notes the following:

It is of interest to examine the adaptation of the Buddhist religion to the American culture. There is much evidence to suggest that the Buddhist church has become rather thoroughly Americanized. (Cain, 1962, p. 118)

### Acculturation and functional theory

The study of acculturation per se deals mainly with recording the phenomena that results when two distinct cultures come into continuous first hand contact. It does not usually investigate the sociological functions that the resultant phenomena have. The merger, therefore, of acculturation theory with functional theory could give more depth to an understanding of the acculturation process.

Kingsley Davis (1949) in Human Society declares that the functional-structural type of sociological analysis (functional theory) has been most successful in making scientific sense out of nonscientific belief and practice, such as that found in religion. One of the main assumptions that functional theory makes is:

...that society is an emergent whole determined by the organization of its parts and that, being something different from the mere sum of its parts, it cannot be understood in purely individualistic and utilitarian terms. Also, the parts of society cannot be understood apart from but only with reference to the whole. (Davis, 1949, p. 518)

It is also an assumption of functional theory that there are necessary conditions for the existence of any society. One such societal requirement is cohesion or solidarity. Davis concludes thus that "one of the functions of religion is to justify, rationalize, and support the sentiments that give cohesion to the society." (Davis, 1949, p. 519) Furthermore, Davis delineates the specific functional ways in which religion contributes to the cohesion of society.

First it offers, through its system of supernatural belief, an explanation of the group ends and a justification of their primacy. Second it provides, through its collective ritual, a means for the constant renewal of the common sentiments. Third it furnishes, through its sacred objects, a concrete reference for the values and a rallying point for all persons who share the same values. Fourth it provides an unlimited and insuperable source of rewards and punishments--rewards for good conduct, punishments for bad. (Davis, 1949, p. 529)

The functions of religion in meeting society's needs are also set forth by O'Dea (1966). He distinguishes six functions of religion, which are similar to those presented by Davis in that they contribute to social cohesion. They

are as follows:

- (1) Religion provides support, consolation, and reconciliation.
- (2) Religion offers a transcendental relationship and thus provides the emotional ground for a new security and a firmer identity.
- (3) Religion sacralizes the norms and values of established society.
- (4) Religion performs a prophetic function by which institutionalized norms may be criticized.
- (5) Religion provides identity functions.
- (6) Religion is related to the growth and maturaton of individuals (O'Dea, 1966).

In summary, functional theory claims that society is a system or a whole determined by its parts. It also assumes that there are necessary conditions for the survival of society. One such condition is social cohesion, and religion would appear to be one of the major contributors to social cohesion. Religion performs this function by justifying, rationalizing, and supporting the sentiments that are essential for cohesion. It should also be noted that although classic functional theory would assert that the functions of religion are always positive and functional, the negative and dysfunctional aspects of religion should be considered as well.

#### Acculturation and secularization

American society can certainly be called a secular society. Hence, the acculturation of Buddhism to American society has likewise been a confrontation with the secularization process. An acculturation study of Buddhism,

therefore, would do well to include an analysis of the secularization process. Such an analysis could establish just where American Buddhism stands with respect to the secularization process.

With the increasing secularization of society, the concept of secularization has become the focus of much attention. There has also arisen a controversy as to just what the concept of secularization actually entails. In setting forth a theoretical framework for secularization in this paper, therefore, the concept will be defined in "a strict sense to refer to the decline of traditional forms of religiosity, and thus avoid the insoluble debate whether religiosity as such is declining." (Weigert and Thomas, 1970, p. 29)

The decline of traditional forms of religiosity is likewise equated to secularization by David O. Moberg. He defines secularization as "the process by which naturalistic explanations of the universe increase at the expense of theological and mythical ones. The essence of secularization, in its practical impact, consists in the neglect or religious techniques to move and control the operative powers and working causes of the world." (Moberg, 1962, pp. 63-64) Moberg notes, however, that even though the influence of religion on the daily lives of individuals may be growing weaker, religious institutions can still grow by strength.

Thomas O'Dea in The Sociology of Religion also presents a definition of secularization.

Secularization may be said to consist fundamentally of two related transformations in human thinking. There is first the "desacralization" of the attitude toward persons and things--the withdrawal of the kind of emotional involvement which is to be found in the religious response, in the response to the sacred. Secondly,

there is the rationalization of thought--the withholding of emotional participation in thinking about the world. (O'Dea, 1966, p. 81)

O'Dea also sets down the five kinds of human activity that have been significant in influencing the secularization of thought. They are: work, war, exchange, government, and learning and science.

Robert Redfield's (1947) "The Folk Society" gives insight into how the secularization process actually operates in societies. The folk society is characterized as "small, isolated, nonliterate, and homogeneous, with a strong sense of group solidarity." (Redfield, 1947, p. 297) It is further viewed as a sacred society in that "one may not, without calling into effect negative social sanctions, challenge as valueless what has come to be traditional in that society." (Redfield, 1948, p. 303) Referring to his studies in Yucatan, Redfield draws this conclusion with respect to secularization and folk societies. "... The less isolated and more heterogeneous communities of the peninsula of Yucatan are the more secular and individualistic and the more characterized by disorganization of culture." (Redfield, 1947, p. 307)

The secular society is examined in more detail by Howard Becker (1950). He defines the secular society as "one in which resistance to change is at a minimum or, to say the very least, where change in many aspects of life is usually quite welcome." (Becker, 1950, p. 67) Becker also claims that there are two varieties of secular societies, unstable and stable. He characterizes unstable secular societies as having such traits as: accessibility, openmindedness, dwindling kinship influence, specialization, anonymity, a liking for the new, and stressing the written word. The stable secular society



differs from the unstable in that the obsession for the new is held in check by some sacred practice, precept, or principle. The ideology of democracy is an example of such a sacred check.

The most that can be said of any society, [therefore] is that it is highly secularized or is secularizing rapidly, for sacred components always remain, are regenerated, or are developed afresh in some form. (Becker, 1950, p. 67)

Secularization, in summary, can be defined as the decline of traditional forms of religiosity. Exactly what this decline involves can be better understood by contrasting sacred and secular societies. A sacred society can be typically described as small, isolated and homogeneous. It is sacred in that it does not challenge rationally what has come to be traditionally accepted. A secular society, on the other hand, continuously calls into question that which is sacred or traditional. Secular societies can furthermore be typed as unstable and stable. Unstable secular societies can be characterized as having an obsession for change and in constant opposition to the traditional. Stable secular societies likewise question the traditional, but their liking for the new is held in check by sacred practices. Secularization per se, therefore, is the process in which there is a withdrawal from the emotional involvement found in traditional forms of religion to more rational thinking about the world.

### Summary

The acculturation process or the changes that have taken place in the interchange of Buddhism with American culture are certainly essential to any analysis of American Buddhism. Likewise of importance, are the sociological functions, both the positive and the negative, which the acculturation changes

perform with respect to American society as a whole. Finally, American Buddhism can be examined in terms of the secularization process and its religious significance. An investigation of the above areas would provide a more thorough description of Buddhism in American culture. Recognizing the fact that there has been a minimal amount of research on American Buddhism, it is the intent of this study to investigate the previously mentioned areas and provide more insight into the sociological phenomenon of American Buddhism.

## CHAPTER IV

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

Cultural anthropologists have traditionally studied small, out-of-the-way cultures, and in their investigations have attempted to capture the wholeness of the cultures studied. In pursuing their studies, they have also developed a variety of methods that have been quite effective in studying cultures. Among such modern anthropological methods are those used for gathering, ordering, and interpreting data. Specifically, methods or techniques have been devised for making initial contacts, sampling, interviewing, observing, recording data, and analyzing data. A full description of these techniques is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a brief description of each technique will be presented. It is desired that these descriptions will at least give the reader some inkling as to what the anthropological method involves.

To begin, initial contacts are always vital in social research, but they are even more crucial when one studies a small, tightly-knit society. Rapport is essential, and anthropological techniques for establishing rapport are numerous and individualized. It is also in the initial contacts that the intent of one's research will have to be communicated. At this point it is important to be "accurate, honest, and open." (Williams, 1967, p. 16)

Anthropologists have often only given minor consideration to sampling. Although this neglect has called forth criticism, sampling has remained relative, as random sampling presents unique problems for the anthropologists. For instance, some informants simply do not have the time or for some other reason will not submit to the time-consuming techniques of the anthropologists. Complete population coverage in these cases, therefore, is not obtained. Furthermore, there is always the problem of establishing rapport and cooperation, and the use of random sampling presents the problem of creating new techniques which may or may not be effective in meeting the objectives of the anthropologists.

There are several types of interview techniques used by anthropologists. Two types are the passive and active interviews. The passive interview technique permits the informants to talk with a minimum amount of direction, whereas the active interview guides the responses of the informants. To guide the responses of the informants in the active interviews, either the open-ended or straight questioning techniques can be used. The former is nondirective and attempts to guide spontaneous responses around some topic area. The latter is a direct questioning technique and is used to elicit specific information (Honigmann, 1954).

Observation techniques are likewise numerous. One basic comment, however, can be made about the way in which one observes behavior and that is that the style should be of such a nature that it puts one "at the greatest ease and provides the maximum information." (Williams, 1967, p. 23)

The recording of data also entails a number of anthropological techniques. In more recent years, cameras and recorders have been used. Field notes, however, are still widely used. These notes can be taken during an interview or after. Many anthropologists prefer, however, to take as few notes as possible during an interview. This technique seems to help the informants feel more at ease.

Lastly, the anthropological method of analysis is the comparative method. The assumption is made that the most accurate and meaningful data is discovered when the findings of two or more societies are studied for significant differences and likenesses.

The above is a brief description of the methods used by anthropologists in their studies of culture. Since the present study was basically exploratory, it was decided that the anthropological method would be the best procedure to use in meeting the objectives of the study.

#### Initial contacts

Initial contacts were somewhat difficult to make in that the group of Japanese-American Buddhists being studied resided some 28 miles away from the residency of the researcher and in that the researcher knew absolutely nothing about the community. In the early stages of the study, therefore, the researcher tried to gain some insights about the Buddhist community by "asking around" the community in which the researcher lived. It was hoped that these initial contacts might provide leads that would direct the researcher in obtaining the name of the X\_\_\_\_ Buddhist leader. Finally, through a

fortuitous situation, the name was obtained. The husband of the researcher and his professor were attending a general advisory committee meeting in vocational education in a city approximately six miles from X\_\_\_\_, Utah. At the meeting, mention was made of the researcher's proposed study to one of the members of the advisory committee and of the fact that the researcher was interested in securing the name of the leader of the X\_\_\_\_ Buddhist Church. The advisory committee member happened to be employed at the local bank and knew a young Japanese-American woman employed there from whom she might be able to get the information desired. As it turned out, she was able to get the name of the president of the X\_\_\_\_ Church and relayed this information back to the researcher. The name of the minister, however, was not available.

The advisory committee member also informed the researcher's husband at the meeting that there was an annual X\_\_\_\_ Buddhist bazaar held every fall and that this might interest the researcher. The researcher, therefore, obtained the date and time of the bazaar through some friends who received one of the newspapers in the X\_\_\_\_ area. In November, 1970, therefore, the researcher, along with her husband and son, attended the X\_\_\_\_ Buddhist bazaar.

The bazaar was an evening affair and was attended by both Caucasians and Japanese Americans. It was hoped that the researcher could possibly make the acquaintance of the X\_\_\_\_ Buddhist president or minister at the bazaar; but the situation did not present itself. Most of the Buddhists were

busy running the bazaar and conversation with them was more or less inopportune. The researcher did, however, carry on some casual conversation with one Japanese-American woman and her children. All in all, the bazaar at least gave the researcher an opportunity to observe one aspect of the Japanese-American Buddhist community life.

It was not until a cold morning in January, 1971, before the researcher was finally able to make a significant contact. The researcher and her family began the trip to X\_\_\_ on snow-covered roads with the intention of setting up an appointment, in person, with the X\_\_\_ Buddhist president. To learn the whereabouts of the Buddhist president, the husband of the researcher asked for directions, at a local service station, to the residency of the individual whose name had been received through the advisory committee member and who was assumed to be the X\_\_\_ Buddhist president. In asking for directions, he also informed the several Japanese-Americans in the service station that the researcher wanted to do a study on Buddhism. The researcher's husband was then told that the name the researcher had was no longer the name of the Buddhist president and that if the researcher wanted to know anything about Buddhism, she should speak to the service-station owner's wife. A meeting was, therefore, immediately arranged and directions were given to the informant's residency. The researcher made the contact and spent two and one half hours discussing the Buddhist religion with the informant. The informant was very cooperative and advised the researcher that she would be willing to help in any way she could. She later became one of the key informants in the study.

### Sample

The population from which the sample in this study was primarily drawn was that of the Japanese-American members of the X\_\_\_\_ Church. A select few of non-Buddhist informants from the X\_\_\_\_ area were also used to give a more complete picture of the Japanese-American Buddhist community life. The sample size was relative. It reflected the number obtainable and the number necessary to meet the objectives of the study.

### Interviews

The passive, in-depth interview technique was used to collect the data for this study. This interview method was chosen over others because of its flexibility. Flexibility was needed in this study for two reasons. First there was little information on American Buddhism, and a flexible interview technique permitted an in-depth exploration into the subject matter. Second, it contributed to the establishment of rapport which is so essential in a study of the religious values of a minority group. It should be noted at this point that rapport was established, and the informants were very cooperative.

The total number of informants interviewed was 14. The names of the informants were obtained through the informants. It was not much of a problem getting the names, since everyone knew everyone else. It may have been easier to obtain the names from a church roster than by the method used, but the X\_\_\_\_ Buddhist Church was in a state of transition at the time. Furthermore, the only names the Buddhists seemed to have with respect to members of their church were those of the Buddhists who had pledged support for a full-time minister.



It should also be noted that contacting the informants posed a few problems. Most of the informants worked and were not available during the day. For this reason, special arrangements had to be made in some cases to gain interviews.

A description of the informants interviewed is as follows. Of the ten Buddhists interviewed, two were Issei, seven were Nisei, and one was Sansei. Two of the three male informants were born in Utah and one was born in Japan. Five of the seven female informants were born outside of Utah but in the United States. The other two were born in Japan and Utah respectively. Most of the informants had at least a high school education, and two had post-high school educations. All the subjects but one were married, and four of the six married female informants worked outside the home. The one unmarried female informant was a university student. The three male informants were employed as a Buddhist minister, a farmer, and the owner and operator of a service station.

Four non-Buddhist informants were interviewed, two males and two females. One was a Caucasian, university professor, one a Sansei university student, and two a retired Caucasian farming couple. All were born or at least had lived or were living in the X\_\_\_ area.

The questions asked of the informants varied from situation to situation. To begin, broad questions, acquired from a review of literature, were asked of the informants. As more information was gained on American Buddhism, the questions became more specific. Each informant was furthermore

not necessarily asked the same questions. Rather questions were repeated only when the researcher believed verification was necessary.

Although the questioning technique was quite successful, it should be said that the subjects did show some reluctance to discuss Buddhism. This was due to the fact that many felt that they were not well-versed in their religion. The researcher, therefore, was often referred to one of the key informants for information by the informants. To rectify this predicament, the researcher explained to the informants that this was a sociological study and that the researcher wanted to study Buddhism as the people themselves lived it. After such an explanation, the subjects were usually quite willing to cooperate with the researcher.

No specific time limit was set on the length of the interviews. Those subjects who had time and were willing to discuss Buddhism were interviewed to the advantage of the study. Most interviews averaged about an hour. They ranged, however, anywhere from 15 minutes to two and one half hours. The total time of all the interviews was 21 hours.

Travel was necessary to conduct the majority of interviews. Approximately one hour of travel time was necessary for each trip to X\_\_\_\_. Some subjects, however, were available in the community in which the researcher resided; and this situation was taken advantage of. Also, one trip had to be made to a city some 50 miles from the residency of the researcher to contact the former minister of the X\_\_\_\_ Church. When the study began, the minister was serving as the part-time minister for the X\_\_\_\_ Church. Since that time, however, the church has become an independent church with a full-time minister.

### Recording of data

The recording of the data attained in the interviews and observations was not done in the presence of the informants in the majority of cases. In the few cases where notes were taken in the presence of informants, it was kept at a minimum. The data, therefore, in most cases was recorded as soon as possible after each interview or observation. Recording was done in longhand in a notebook. Later the notes were transferred to notecards.

### Observations

Three general observations were made during the study. These were at the Buddhist bazaar, which has already been described, at a Sunday worship service, and at a local service station. A total of six hours was spent on observations.

One Buddhist church service was attended by the researcher and her husband on a Sunday evening in May, 1971. The service began at eight o'clock and lasted one and one half hours. A social was held after the service and the researcher and her husband were invited to attend. The social offered a very good opportunity to mingle and converse with the Japanese-American Buddhists.

The researcher also had a chance to make observations while chit-chatting at a local service station run by a Japanese-American. The service station served as a local gathering place and offered some informal observation of a few of the Buddhists in their community life.

### Analysis of data

The method of analysis used in this study was qualitative. The purpose of the study was mainly to describe the data gathered in terms of relevant socio-logical-anthropological theories. This analysis method is in contrast to quantitative analysis, which is concerned with the measurement of data and the presentation of data in statistical tables. Both analysis methods have their merit. Since this study was exploratory and the purpose of the study was to better inform the researcher about American Buddhism, qualitative or descriptive analysis was deemed as the most appropriate method of analysis for this study.

In analyzing the data gathered in this study qualitatively, the comparative method was used in part of the analysis. Data on modern Japanese Buddhism obtained through the literature, was compared to the field data gathered on American Buddhism by the researcher. To ascertain the significance of this comparison in relationship to the acculturation process, a theoretical framework was developed from prominent acculturation theories. This theoretical framework served as an analytical tool with which to meaningfully compare and relate the facts on American Buddhism and thereby, determine the extent of the acculturation of Buddhism in America.

The data gathered by the researcher was also analyzed in terms of the functional and secularization theories. Again, the theoretical framework was devised from the literature. In connection with the functional theory, the researcher attempted to show what functional role the acculturation changes of American Buddhism has played in respect to the X\_\_\_ society of Buddhists and Mormons. Lastly, the researcher tried to show what has happened in respect to American Buddhism and the secularization process.

CHAPTER V  
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Modern Japanese Buddhism

Japanese Buddhism reflects the influence of both Indian and Chinese cultures from which it originated. Yet, Japanese Buddhism is unique to Japan and reveals the distinct influence of Japanese culture. Today, there are approximately 175 sects of Japanese Buddhism with some 70,000,000 claimed adherents (Norbeck, 1970). These sects are customarily grouped into the following six schools of Buddhism: Tendai, Shingon, Jōdo, Zen, Jōdo Shin, and Nichiren. Each school also has a number of sects and sub-sects associated with it. The practices of each sect are diverse and include such activities as the solemn meditation of Zen as well as the zealous drum-beating of the Nichirenites. The doctrines of the Buddhist sects are also characteristically diverse and attract both the philosophical and the superstitious (Anesaki, 1961).

The two sects, Hongwan-ji and Otani, of Jōdo Shin (Shinshū) Buddhism are the most popular of the Japanese Buddhist sects and are commonly called the Shin sects. The two centers, Nishi Hongwan-ji and Higashi Hongwan-ji, of the Buddhist church known as Jōdo Shin or "True Pure Land Sect" can be found in Kyoto, the ancient capital for a thousand years. The worshippers of the Hongwan-ji and Otani sects number about 14 million (Saunders, 1964).

They are the followers of Shinran (1173-1262) who taught that spiritual enlightenment could be attained by simply calling the name of Amida (Namu Amidabutsu). The word Hongwan-ji comes from Hongwan and means the "Original Vow." The Original Vow is believed to have been made by Buddha Amida to bring salvation to those who have faith and call his name and to lead them to his Paradise in the West or "The Pure Land." Evil-doing is no hindrance to the faith and devotion demanded by Buddha Amida. Shinran distinguishes this way of salvation as the easy way in comparison to that of other Buddhist methods which are more stringent in their requirements to achieve Enlightenment (Anesaki, 1961).

Before this portion on the Shin sects is concluded, some mention should be made about the Shin Temples. The Hongwan-ji temple in Tokyo, for example, is predominantly Hindu in architectural design, a very rare style for Buddhist temples in Japan. Upon entering the temple, however, the Japanese effect in the main hall is immediately evident. Some distance from the entrance is a high altar with an elaborately decorated shrine in which a statue of the Buddha Amida sits, and every morning utterances can be heard in the hall as worshippers recite the words "Namu Amida-butsu." Another Shin temple is that of Higashi-Hongwan-ji in Kyoto. This temple was completed in 1895 and is a building of immense height with double eaves. Although the building is large in area too, the temple hardly seems big enough on special Buddhist holidays when thousands of country people from all over Japan come to the temple (Anesaki, 1961).

The descriptions presented on the Hongwan-ji and Otani sects of Jōdo Shin Buddhism were given because these two sects are the most popular sects of Japanese Buddhism. A description of all the Buddhist sects, however, in terms of their distinct characteristics would be quite lengthy. A more feasible task, therefore, would be to present the similarities of the Buddhist sects, or the common features of Japanese Buddhism in general. In this way, a closer look at the social realities of Japanese Buddhism can be arrived at.

With respect to the traditional beliefs of Buddhism, most of the Japanese Buddhist sects hold the subsequent beliefs. First they believe in the historical founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha. This belief, however, does not always include the worship of Gautama. Second, the majority of Buddhist sects believe in the teachings of Gautama as the means to salvation. It should be mentioned, however, that these teachings are not interpreted in the same manner by all the sects (Norbeck, 1970).

The Buddhist sects can also be said to be alike in their organization, activities, and facilities. They all have scriptures, temples, and a priesthood hierarchy; and they all conduct funerals, memorials and some fixed yearly rites, as well as engage in social welfare activities. In the ritual and administration roles, the older or the established Buddhist sects still allow very little participation by their lay members in comparison to the newer sects. Finally, most of the sects have organizations for youths' and women's groups; but again, the newer or more recent sects are more organized and active (Norbeck, 1970).

The holding of annual festivals can be considered as another similar feature of Japanese Buddhism. These festivals are held to earn extra income. Although there are certainly some religious emotions tied up with these festivals, they can easily be described as commercial enterprises rather than religious activities. They are, in fact, often sponsored by both the Buddhist temples and the municipal governments. Likewise, strictly commercial forms of entertainment are commonplace at Buddhist festivals, such as folk dancing and peculiar and outdated Japanese customs (Norbeck, 1970).

Although the festivals no doubt contribute somewhat to the maintenance of the Buddhist temples, the temples are normally run by contributions and primarily those from funerals. The Buddhist sects also have new secondary sources of income. Famous, old temples, for example, have been made into museums and sightseers are charged fees. Teahouses and restaurants are operated by the temples, as well as kindergartens and day nurseries. These latter income sources, however, have not been great and other added social welfare activities have been more of an expense than a good source of extra income. Lastly, classes in knitting, flower arranging, and the customary tea ceremony are oftentimes offered by the wives of Buddhist priests to supplement the temple income (Norbeck, 1970).

The Buddhist sects in general do not have salaried priests. Rather, the Buddhist priests receive a part of the temple income and are provided with living quarters at the temple. The average income of local temples, however, have been shown in a study of the Sōtō sect, one of the sects of Zen Buddhism, to be insufficient in meeting the livelihood requirements of



the Buddhist priests. Hence, many Sōtō priests are otherwise employed as schoolteachers, social workers, and in public offices. This problem of earning a living, it has been suggested by Norbeck, may be one of the reasons why there are so few young Buddhist priests. It should be remarked further that a survey of citizens' opinions on occupational social rank shows that the status of the Buddhist priest is very low, much lower than the status rank of Buddhist priests in the past (Norbeck, 1970).

The toleration of other religions is a characteristic possessed by most of the participants of the Buddhist sects. It is a trait, in fact, shared by most of the Japanese as a whole. This toleration of other religions by the Japanese can perhaps be explained by religious indifference. Many modern Japanese, for example, regard all religions as alike. An ordinary citizen of modern Japan in most instances cannot present an account of the Buddhist doctrine of his own sect. Likewise, young adults often do not even know the Buddhist sect of their own family (Norbeck, 1970). This indifference can be illustrated further by the behavior of the Japanese making pilgrimages to the many sanctuaries in Japan. These Japanese sanctuaries are usually differentiated according to denominational differences. Yet, it is not surprising to see a pilgrim before a Roman Catholic Cathedral throw a coin to the crucifix just as is customary at Buddhist or Shinto sanctuaries (Anesaki, 1961).

The practices in regard to religious affiliation are quite different among the various Buddhist sects in contrast to other Japanese religions. Theoretically, Buddhist temple affiliations are determined by choice, but in

actual practice affiliation would appear to be determined by kinship ties. Most individuals become affiliated with the temple of their parents; and when they leave the community of their parents, they do not become affiliated with any other Buddhist temple. In fact, if they do attempt to affiliate with another Buddhist temple, they are not warmly received (Norbeck, 1970).

Overseas missionary work has not been shared by all the Buddhist sects. The majority of the missionary work has been done by the two Shin sects followed by Sōtō, Jōdō, and Nichiren. Until recently, missionary work has meant to follow the emigrants, who had been Buddhists in Japan, and provide for their religious needs. This missionary work eventually led to the establishment of congregations in America. The immigrant generation in America, however, is now dying out and the second and third generations are definitely part of the American culture. What the role of the Buddhist missionaries will play in the future remains to be seen (Anesaki, 1961).

Today, the significance of the established sects of Buddhism in the daily lives of modern Japanese seems to be dwindling. Until the war, the daily life of the Japanese Buddhists in the home and community was very religious-oriented. In the rural areas, most homes had a butsudan (Buddhist household shrine). Before the shrine were objects of worship and memorial tablets of ancestors. Offerings such as flowers, lanterns, incense, and food were placed before the altar and a daily service was held by either clapping the hands, as a symbol of spiritual communion, or chanting the Buddhist liturgies. Today, however, even though Buddhism has changed very little over the years in terms of doctrine, organization, and activities, rural Buddhist temples have few

active parishioners while the urban temples do not gain members because of the traditional practices of religious affiliation (Anesaki, 1961). The established sects of Japanese Buddhism are furthermore regarded as obsolete in their teachings and methods by many modern Japanese. Japanese Buddhism, in like manner, is called "the 'graveyard' or 'funeral' religion because it enters the lives of most people only in ceremonies connected with death and the spirits of ancestors, traditional ceremonies that may have little significance to their participants under modern conditions of life." (Norbeck, 1970)

Despite this apparent state of Japanese Buddhism, prospects are generally regarded as favorable for the future. The revamping of Japanese Buddhism, for instance, has already begun by the two Shin sects and the Sōtō sect. Conservatism, however, continues to be the rule. A conservative attitude, however, is not the answer for the survival of Japanese Buddhism amidst the great social and cultural changes in modern Japan. It should not be forgotten, however, that the history of Buddhism in Japan shows that it has been tremendously adaptable to social and cultural changes (Norbeck, 1970).

#### American Buddhism in X\_\_\_\_, Utah

The only Buddhist school which has denominations in America is that of Jōdo Shin (Shinsū). There has been a movement toward Zen Buddhism by non-Buddhists, but this movement has progressed no further than the cult stage. In America, the main adherents of Jōdo Shin Buddhism, commonly called Shin Buddhism, are the Japanese and the Japanese Americans. In recent years, however, some Americans have also joined the American

Buddhist Churches. American Buddhism, in view of the majority of its adherents, is obviously a Japanese phenomena in America. The Buddhist Churches of America, however, is an autonomous organization and is run by Japanese-Americans. The only connection it has with Japan are spiritual ties with the headquarters of the Hongwan-ji sect in Kyoto, Japan. The head of the American Buddhist Churches holds the title of Bishop and is in charge of all religious activities as well as the clergy. Each Buddhist Church, however, is autonomous in that it has complete control over its property. The real strength of the American Buddhist Churches can be found in Utah, Arizona, Washington, Oregon, and California (Mead, 1965). At present, there are approximately 60 churches and 40 branches throughout the United States mainland. Also, there are some 80 ministers who serve over 100,000 lay Buddhists (Tsuji, K., n.d.).

The Japanese-Americans in X\_\_\_\_, Utah are followers of the teachings of Shinran and belong to the Jōdo Shin school of Buddhism. Most of their religious education has come through kin, church services, and individual readings.

Among the basic beliefs of the Shin Buddhists in Utah is a belief in the historical founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha. He is viewed as one of the many Buddhas or individuals who have attained Enlightenment. Amida Buddha, the Buddhist God, is conceived as an impersonal God or as an abstract being. This is in contrast to the personal conception of God which is held by Christians. This abstract, impersonal God, as one Buddhist put it, does not say come to me,

as a personal God might; because he is already a part of you. Oneness with Amida Buddha and with mankind is the ultimate goal of the Buddhists. To achieve Enlightenment in this life, the Buddhists believe in the "middle road" approach or the avoiding of extremes, which was the preferred method of Gautama Buddha. The "middle road," however, is a narrow and difficult road to take and so many people do not reach Enlightenment on this earth. The Buddhists believe, however, that Enlightenment will be reached by all after death. (This is in accordance with the "Original Vow" of Amida Buddha.) Although there is a preferred way to attain Enlightenment, there is not one, and only one way, but many ways; and since one does not know which way may lead to Enlightenment for others, one should not judge others. With respect to Buddhism in comparison to Christianity, the Buddhists perceive their religion as being more concerned with life today and Christianity as being more preoccupied with death. For the Buddhists, heaven and hell are here on earth; and if one leads a good life, one need not worry about death.

The X\_\_\_\_ Buddhist Church of the Japanese in Utah bears the name of the town located about one and one half miles to the east of the church. The X\_\_\_\_ Church was built in 1930 and was originally intended to serve as a boardinghouse or dormitory for a sugar beet factory which was to be constructed next to the dormitory. These plans for a factory, however, did not materialize; and the Japanese-Americans bought the building a few years later. In the late 1930's, just before World War II, the building became the official branch of a Buddhist church in a city some 25 miles from X\_\_\_\_. Before this

time, the Buddhists had held services in the Farmers' Association building whenever their priest came. Today, the X\_\_\_\_ Church has about 40 families and is an independent church with a full-time priest.

The building of the X\_\_\_\_ Church, due to the original purpose of its construction, is obviously not the typical design of the Buddhist Churches of America. It is a two-story building with a recently added one-story building in the back in which services are held. The church building itself sits on an isolated piece of land, of which the X\_\_\_\_ Church owns several acres.

Inside the church building, on the lower level and to the east end of the original building, is the residency of the minister. Right next to the residency is a fully equipped kitchen with an adjoining room used for socials. Upstairs are several rooms which are used when the occasion demands more space. The new addition serves as a chapel. To the front of the chapel is a stage with drawn curtains. On each half of the curtain is a white Japanese wisteria against a purple background. The wisteria, because of its characteristic drooping, is said to symbolize the humility of Shinran. When services are held, the curtains are opened; and a richly decorated shrine, containing a painting of Shinran, is exposed. Before the shrine are offerings of food and of flowers, symbolically arranged. To the right of the shrine is a small table and a chair on which the minister sits during the service. Below the center of the stage on the main floor is a table with a small vessel of incense and a larger vessel in which the incense is burned. To the left of the table containing incense is a pulpit used by the religious leader during the services and to the right is a pulpit used by the minister during his sermons. The rest of the chapel

consists of a piano and neatly arranged folding chairs, which all have home-made pillows, of various colors and designs, placed on them.

The services conducted at the X\_\_\_ Church are for weddings, funerals, memorials, Buddhist holidays, and regular worship services. Until a few months ago, services had been held quite irregularly as the X\_\_\_ Church was a branch church and could only have the services of a minister once a month. They now have a full-time minister, however and have fairly regular services every Sunday.

These Sunday services are attended primarily by the Issei and the Nisei and are conducted in Japanese. Songs are sung, sūtras are chanted, and Buddhist rosaries are used throughout the services. One can also not help but hear the recitation of the words "Namu Amida-Butsu" during the services. Halfway through the services, there is a sermon by the minister; and shortly after the sermon is finished, there is the burning of incense by each of the Buddhists. After the services are ended, a social is held. On the occasion when the researcher attended the social, fruit, cookies, and green Japanese tea were served to the background of Japanese music.

The services attended by the Sansei are the Sunday school services held every Sunday morning. The Sunday school program was begun in the X\_\_\_ Church in the early 1950's by the Buddhist women and has since remained under their direction. The services are primarily in English, but the sūtras are chanted in Japanese with the English translation beneath the Japanese words. Hymns are sung and are similar to those sung in Christian Churches. The women teaching the Sansei have found it somewhat difficult to answer the

inquiring questions posed by the Sansei. One Nisei remarked that when she went to Sunday school everyone accepted what she said, but now the children question everything. Special Sunday school services are conducted on Mother's Day and Father's Day and the respective parents are invited to the services. The Sunday school children also occasionally provide entertainment at the adult Sunday evening services.

The Buddhist minister who officiates at the services in the X\_\_\_ Church was born in Japan and speaks very little English. He is married and is more or less in retirement. It was because the Buddhist minister was in retirement that the Buddhists were able to financially support him as a full-time minister. Younger ministers with families were much too costly to hire on a full-time basis. The X\_\_\_ Church, therefore, is now an independent church, the first time in thirty years.

With respect to youths' and women's groups, quite common in the other Buddhist Churches in America, the X\_\_\_ Church has been very inactive and unorganized in this regard. The older Sansei have been relatively uninterested in respect to any Buddhist activities, and many women have not had the time or interest necessary for an active women's group. Recently, however, the new minister encouraged the women to organize a women's group and the X\_\_\_ Buddhist Church now has an official women's group.

The income to support the X\_\_\_ Church has come fundamentally from the annual Buddhist bazaar put on by the Japanese-Americans. One of the main attractions at the bazaar is the Japanese sukiyaki dinner. Several other Japanese dishes are also served along with the popular American "sloppy



joe" for those who do not like Japanese food. The chapel itself is transformed for this event and the neatly folded chairs are placed at long tables. The stage is likewise used but the shrine is put aside. Actually, there is no evidence to suggest that this church building ever had a chapel. Upstairs there are games of Bingo and fish pond. Later in the evening an auction and a raffle are held.

Although the bazaars have been quite successful and have provided an excellent source of income for the upkeep of the X\_\_\_ Church, the hiring of a full-time minister meant that the Buddhists heeded a new source of income. The Buddhists, therefore, were asked to make money pledges for the support of the minister. The minister also receives special donations at the various services. These donations are given when the Buddhists burn incense. finally, a minor source of income that should be mentioned is the church membership fee paid by each Buddhist family.

The X\_\_\_ Church also has a congregational constitution which provides for a certain number of elected offices to be filled by the church members for one year periods. The offices are that of the president, vice-president, treasurer, auditor, religious leader, social chairman, and athletic chairman.

As far as the daily religious practices of the Buddhists, it is customary to recite the "Namu Amida-butsu" every morning and evening before a household shrine or butsudan, inherited by most of the Buddhists from their parents. These shrines are elaborately decorated and are much like the shrines found in the Buddhist churches. Food offerings and flowers are placed in front of, as well as inside, the shrine. The Buddhists also place the gifts they receive

from others in front of the altar. These various offerings symbolize sharing or oneness with Amida Buddha and all mankind. Also before the shrine are a vessel of incense, a chime and a wooden stick (used in chanting the sūtras), Buddhist rosaries on a specially-made stand, and photographs of relatives who have died. Many of these practices of the American Buddhists in respect to the Buddhist shrine are similar to the practices of the Buddhists in Japan.

It should also be noted, at this point, that the Buddhists incorporate various aspects of the American holidays into their religious life. They have done this, as has been already mentioned, with Mother's Day and Father's Day. They have also done this with Memorial Day and Christmas. On Memorial day, the Buddhist minister and the Buddhists go as a group (in cars) to all the Japanese graves; and the minister performs a service over each grave. At the Christmas season, the Buddhists have used the American Christmas tree and gift-giving customs as part of their annual Bodhi Day celebrations held around December 8.

Some mention should be made about the Sansei and the role of religion in their lives. Most of the older Sansei have left X\_\_\_\_, Utah and have either affiliated with no church or one of the Christian Churches. Coming from a predominantly Mormon community, several of the Sansei have quite naturally become members of the Mormon Church (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints). The primary reason for conversion would appear to be social. One Sansei, for instance, related to researcher that she became a Mormon because all her friends were Mormons and because all the social activities were held at the Mormon church. Another Sansei informed the researcher

that as a youngster she had been ashamed to be a Buddhist and that although she has been very active in the Buddhist church, she has been seriously considering becoming a Mormon. When asked by the researcher why, she said because most of her friends were Mormons. The younger Sansei, although not joining the Mormon Church, have participated in many of the activities sponsored by the Mormon Church. They have, for example, joined the Boy Scout Troup and the basketball team at the local Mormon Church. The tendency for the Sansei to participate in Mormon activities occurs most often in cases where the Sansei have good Mormon friends. It would appear, therefore, that the Sansei are attracted to the Mormon religion and its activities primarily because many of the friends of the Sansei are Mormon and because the Mormon Church offers the Sansei an active social life. The Nisei furthermore do not really object to their children participating in Mormon activities. Many admit, however, that they would like their children to keep the Buddhist faith but say that the final choice is up to their children and any religion is better than none.

The majority of the Nisei, unlike the Sansei, are much stronger in their religious convictions. Most Nisei Buddhists associate with fellow-Buddhists and even at times with non-Buddhist Japanese-Americans. For example, the Buddhist Bazaar is put on by the cooperative efforts of most of the Japanese-Americans as a whole. The fact that the Nisei are of the Buddhist faith in a Mormon community also seems to be no social handicap, as far as most of the Buddhists are concerned. The only detection of possible religiously caused friction is in the economic sphere. One Buddhist, the owner and operator of

a business concern in X\_\_\_\_, commented that his only "good" customers, besides the Japanese-Americans, are the "Jack" Mormons, never the "good" Mormons. The "good" Mormons patronize another business concern that is operated by a Mormon. Although the circumstances in this situation might be different, the situation itself does not seem unusual in a small, rural community. It does, however, bring out the influential nature of religion in social relationships.

#### Acculturation analysis

This section will analyze the acculturation patterns of the X\_\_\_\_ Church. The background information necessary to understand the subsequent analysis has already been given in the preceding sections. The analysis will cover two areas of acculturation. It will attempt, first of all, to set forth the contact situation in which the acculturation process took place. Second, it will present the changes which have taken place in Buddhism in X\_\_\_\_ as a result of the acculturation process.

The initial contact of the culture receiving group of Issei Buddhists with the American Mormons came around 1910. At that time the Issei had just begun to come to X\_\_\_\_ to grow sugar beets. Prior to that time they had worked on the sugar plantations in Hawaii. At first, most of the Issei were hired as farm laborers, but it was not long before they bought their own farms on a rent-cash basis. It was believed at the time, by some Americans, that the Issei could not be able to pay the mortgage on their farms and in that way the farms

would be returned to the Americans. The Issei, however, were very successful farmers and in no time paid off their mortgages.

The first contacts were neither overly hostile nor friendly. One Nisei Buddhist, for instance, recalls his Issei parents speaking about how the Buddhist priest was run out in the early days. Social relationships, however, could not have been too strained for the Mormons went around asking the Issei for donations toward the building of their new church and did, in fact, receive donations from the Issei.

The Issei in their early contacts certainly had problems communicating with the Americans as most of them spoke only Japanese. The few surviving Issei, to this day, still speak very little English. In this sense the Issei were somewhat isolated in their contacts with the Americans and were thus able to preserve many of their original ways. The Nisei, however, attended integrated public schools, unlike some of the Nisei in the coastal states, and became influenced by the American culture. Nevertheless, the Nisei had to live in both the American and Japanese cultures at the same time, and on weekends attended a Japanese language school in order to better speak the language of their parents.

The first real strains of contact came around World War II. Although the Issei and the Nisei were not sent to concentration camps, they did receive some discriminatory treatment. Signs were posted by some farmers stating that they would not hire the Issei or Nisei. Also, in the immediate area of X\_\_\_, shots were fired through the door of a building inhabited by Japanese descendants (Smith, 1948).

After the war, the social relationships between the Issei and Nisei and the Americans in X\_\_\_\_ began to improve; and interestingly enough, many of the problems encountered revolved around the religious factor rather than the racial factor. The Nisei, for example, were the subjects of many conversion attempts by missionaries from the dominant Mormon religion in the X\_\_\_\_ area. Obviously some Nisei were converted to Mormonism; but all in all the Nisei were not too responsive to the attempts of the Mormon missionaries and were eventually left to practice their own religion. The Nisei also experienced some difficulties while their children were attending the local public school. The Mormon Church held religious instruction classes after school, and it was believed to be most advantageous for the schoolbus driver to wait until these classes were over before taking all the school children home. This situation caused no problem for the majority of the children, as they were Mormons; but the non-Mormons found this setup inconvenient. This situation, however, was brought to the attention of the proper authorities and was finally rectified.

The more recent contacts between the Buddhists and the Mormons have been generally good. The Nisei are considered by one American Mormon as very friendly and cooperative. Many of the Nisei themselves regard living in a Mormon community as causing them no particular problems. One Nisei, however, remarked that she has never been able to adjust to living in a community where there is a strong religious majority and always feels a covert struggle between herself and the Mormons. The Buddhists and the Mormons, however, do participate in one another's church bazaars; and the Buddhists have even offered their church facilities for a Mormon wedding when the Mormon Church

was being repaired. Furthermore, some of the Sansei have and still do take part in Mormon sponsored activities.

Among the many changes which have taken place in the Buddhist religion, as a result of the acculturation process, is that with respect to religious indifference. The American Buddhists in the X\_\_\_ Church do not share the religious indifference that is characteristic of the Japanese Buddhists (Norbeck, 1970). The Buddhists in X\_\_\_, for instance, are very cognizant of their religious faith and can readily tell one what Buddhist sect they belong to, unlike the Japanese Buddhists (Norbeck, 1970). As one Issei commented to the researcher, she had not really understood what Buddhism was all about until she came to X\_\_\_. The only recollection she had of Buddhism in Japan was that there were funerals held at the Buddhist temples. Another indication that the Buddhists in X\_\_\_ are not religiously indifferent is the fact that they do not regard all religions as alike. One Nisei, for example remarked that she cannot understand how the Mormons can tell her that the Mormon religion is very similar to the Buddhist religion, as she perceives the two as being quite different. The researcher also confronted another Nisei and asked if she was aware of any difference between Buddhism and Christianity. She replied that she was and proceeded to list several differences. She said that unlike the Christians, the Buddhists do not speak in terms of meeting their ancestors again, do not believe in a soul apart from the body, do not believe in a God who has created the world, and do not believe in Christ. It is obvious from the above accounts that the Buddhists in X\_\_\_ are like most Americans in that they know exactly what religious sect they belong to, what the basic beliefs

of their sect are, and that their religion or sect is distinct from others. That the Buddhists have accepted the above aspects of American culture is not surprising, as they live in a predominantly Mormon society in which the American religious affiliation is pronounced.

The worship services of the American Buddhists have also changed. In Japan the only services that most Japanese attend at the Buddhist temples, according to one Issei, are funeral services. The Buddhist Church in X\_\_\_\_, however, is different in this respect. It has, besides the traditional funeral and memorial services, Sunday School, Buddhist holiday observances, and regular worship services. In this way it is more than a "funeral religion."

Another definite indication of the influence of American Christian culture on Buddhism in America is the fact that the services in X\_\_\_\_ are held on Sunday. The Buddhists do not, of course, consider Sunday as a sacred day and have no particular day set aside for rest as the Christians have. One Buddhist explained that when work has to be done, they do it; and when their work is finished, they rest. Due to the fact, however, that Sunday has become in Western cultures a day when most secular activities are set aside, it is not surprising that the Buddhists have found it a most convenient day for their religious services.

In addition to the adult services being held on Sunday for the Issei and Nisei, the Sansei attend "Sunday School." One reason for the separation of services is the fact that the Sansei do not speak Japanese, and the adult services are held in Japanese. The Sunday School, therefore, has been an essential adaptation due to the Americanization of the Sansei. This inability of the Sansei to



speak Japanese, however, has caused some concern among the Buddhists. One reason for this is that much of the meaning of the Buddhist religion can be lost without good translators, and good translators have been difficult to find. Also, much of the esthetic value of the Buddhist religion is lost through translation; and this is perhaps the reason why the Sansei chant the sūtras in Japanese.

The American Buddhists have also incorporated many American holidays into their religious practices. Their selection of holidays, however, has not been haphazard and combine very well with the already established Buddhist beliefs and practices. The special attention given to the parents of the Sansei, for instance, at the Sunday school program held on Mother's Day and Father's Day is quite appropriate when one considers that it has been a Buddhist tradition to honor one's ancestors. The Memorial Day services performed over the graves of the Buddhists likewise blend well with the Buddhist beliefs. It has always been a Buddhist custom to hold intermittent memorial services for years after the decease of an ancestor. The American Christmas customs of the tree and gift-giving have also been woven meaningfully into the Bodhi Day celebrations. The Christmas tree is given Buddhist significance in that it is thought of as representative of the Bodhi tree under which Gautama Buddha achieved Enlightenment. The gift-giving custom, of course, is in no way offensive, as it reinforces the Buddhist belief in sharing and oneness with Amida Buddha.

Unlike the lay members of the established sects in Japan (Norbeck, 1970), the Buddhist in X\_\_\_ are quite active in the administrative and ritual roles in their church. As was mentioned earlier, the administrative duties

of the X\_\_\_\_ Church have been taken care of by a group of elected lay church officials. These officials, furthermore, have not been officials in name only but have been quite active in running the administrative affairs of the X\_\_\_\_ Church. In fact, the ex-president was responsible for obtaining a full-time minister for the Buddhists. The Buddhist lay members also appear to be just as active as many of the more active lay members in the Christian services. They have, for example, an elected, lay religious leader who helps in directing the various activities at the worship services. In actuality, the role of the Buddhist minister is similar to that of the role of his Christian counterpart. At most he gives the sermon and leads the various Buddhist liturgies at the worship services. It would certainly appear from the above account that the Buddhists are a very organized religious group. Such organization can be attributed to acculturation in view of the fact the the preceding section on Japanese Buddhism seems to describe a very unorganized religion. American religions in general are usually very highly structured, and it is not surprising that the Buddhists, having lived among the well-organized and active Mormons, have become a very organized and active religious group themselves.

The Buddhist bazaar is a definite consequence of acculturation and resembles the Buddhist festivals in Japan only in that it is held each year to earn income (Norbeck, 1970). This is, however, also the reason why the American Christian Churches hold their bazaars. It would seem reasonable, therefore, that if the Buddhists in America needed an income for the upkeep of their temple, one practical way of obtaining it would be to adapt the American Christian custom of putting on a bazaar.

Although the bazaar has been the chief source of income for the support of the X\_\_\_ Church, it has now, with a full-time minister, been necessary to supplement this income source with a new source. The new source is money pledges by the various members of the Buddhist church. It is obvious that both these major sources of income differ from funeral donations, which is the major source of temple income in Japan (Norbeck, 1970). The American Buddhists, to be sure, give donations to their minister for funerals but such donations alone would be quite inadequate for the upkeep of their church, let alone the livelihood of their minister.

The fact that the Buddhists in X\_\_\_ attend the X\_\_\_ Church does not mean that they are not welcome to join another Buddhist church elsewhere in America. In American Buddhist churches, religious affiliation is not determined by kinship ties as it is in Japan (Norbeck, 1970). Rather, one is affiliated with the Buddhist church in the area in which one happens to live. Furthermore, the Buddhists are received warmly in other Buddhist churches. This would seem to be the case as many Buddhists in X\_\_\_ have had memorial services said at Buddhist churches other than their own.

Finally, the Buddhists, as a result of acculturation call their temple a church and their priest a minister. The correct translation from Japanese into English would be for the American Buddhists to use the terms temple and priest. There were no trained translators, however, when the Buddhists first came to America and the Buddhists became accustomed to using the terms church and minister. These terms, therefore, have become a part of their church language.

In conclusion, it can be said that the acculturation of Buddhism in X\_\_\_\_ has been one of adaptation. It has been one in which the traits of American culture have been adapted and combined with Buddhism to allow for a smoother functioning cultural whole. The specific traits which have been accepted by the Buddhists are: religious awareness, regular worship services, worship services on Sunday, Sunday School services, the incorporation of American holidays into their religious life, church organization, bazaars, money pledges and bazaar funds as the chief source of church income, church affiliation by locality, and the use of the terms church and minister.

#### Functional theory analysis

The changes in Buddhism in X\_\_\_\_ as a result of the acculturation process can be said to have functional significance, in terms of the functional theory, for the existence of the X\_\_\_\_ community of Buddhists and Mormons. The primary function or dysfunction which these acculturation changes can be said to be responsible for is that of social cohesion. This section, therefore, will try to show how these changes have contributed and how these changes have not contributed to the social cohesion of the X\_\_\_\_ society composed of Buddhists and Mormons.

The acculturation changes in the Buddhist religion have contributed to social cohesion by reinforcing the norms and values of the X\_\_\_\_ community. The Sansei, for instance, are taught by their Sunday School teachers to strive toward Enlightenment or the perfection of their character. There are many ways to do this. One way is to refrain from such activities as injuring others, taking the property of others, and telling lies about others. These Buddhist teachings

are also the formal and informal norms governing the X\_\_\_ society as a whole. For example, it is unlawful for one member of X\_\_\_ to physically harm another individual for reasons other than self-defense without some repercussions from the law enforcement agencies in the X\_\_\_ area. The Buddhist teachings, therefore, reinforce the norms of X\_\_\_, and in this way contribute to social cohesion in the total community.

The Buddhist worship services have also aided social cohesion. Recently, the Buddhists were reminded, on the feast of Shinran, to be humble as Shinran was. Such a reminder by the Buddhist minister supports the common sentiment in X\_\_\_ that the Buddhists are somehow inferior to the American Mormons who belong to the strong, well-organized and active Mormon Church. The school bus incident previously mentioned in this study, for instance, certainly illustrates the sentiment that the Mormons are superior to the Buddhists. If this had not been the case, the Buddhists would have been given more consideration in the beginning. Another incident of some years back which shows both the superiority of the Mormons and the submissiveness of the Buddhist is in respect to saying prayers in the local public school. At that time it was customary to say prayers in the public schools. The Buddhists, however, do not pray by petitioning a divinity as the Christians do, and one Buddhist was particularly upset by the fact that prayers were said both in the classes and at the PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) meetings; but as she related to the researcher, the majority of the Buddhists just accepted the practice and were not willing to do anything about it. The fact that the Buddhists are very permissive with respect to the Sansei attending the Mormon classes or religious

instruction and other activities also would seem to imply a submissive attitude on the part of the Buddhists. If the Buddhists were proud and arrogant, they certainly would not allow their children to take part in other religious activities. All these examples, therefore, serve the purpose of showing that there is a common sentiment held in X\_\_\_\_ that the adherents of the Mormon faith are somehow superior to the adherents of the Buddhist faith and that the Buddhist role in social relationships should be one of submission or humility. The Buddhist teachings on humility, therefore, tend to support this common sentiment.

The incorporation of American holidays into the religious life of the Buddhists, the holding of annual Buddhist bazaars, the holding of regular worship services, and the practice of having worship services on Sunday also reinforce the norms and values of X\_\_\_\_. These are all American customs, and the acceptance of these customs by the Buddhists has allowed the Buddhist religion to reinforce the norms and values of the X\_\_\_\_ society which is predominantly of American Mormon background.

One last way in which the Buddhist religion reinforces the norms and values of X\_\_\_\_ and thus contributes to social cohesion is in its teachings about Enlightenment. The Buddhists are taught that the cessation of suffering comes when man is enlightened or when man has attained his highest character. The Buddhists are also told to work hard at developing their character if they want to be good citizens and good Buddhists. The promise of Enlightenment, therefore, for those who strive to purify their character would seem to reinforce the norms and values of the X\_\_\_\_ society as being a good Buddhist seems

to imply being a good citizen. In this way, the Buddhist religion contributes to the social cohesion of X\_\_\_\_\_.

The acculturation changes have also contributed to the cohesiveness of the Buddhist group themselves. The acculturation changes in general have done this by making the Buddhist religion in X\_\_\_\_\_ more acceptable to the Buddhists, a necessity as the Buddhists in their secular lives have also undergone acculturation changes. In making the Buddhist religion more acceptable, the acculturation changes have provided the Buddhists with the common beliefs as a necessary rallying point for the cohesiveness of any group. As Kingsley Davis would say, the Buddhist religion has furnished "through its sacred objects, a concrete reference for the values and a rallying point for all persons who share the same values." (Davis, 1949, p. 529) The Buddhists, therefore, have become a cohesive religious group set apart from their Mormon neighbors. The conclusion that the Buddhists are cohesive can be supported by the following examples. One Buddhist, for instance, when asked if the Buddhists associate much with the Mormons, replied that they only associate at their church bazaars. Another incident which supports the cohesiveness of the Buddhists is the fact that the Buddhist women seem to do things as a group. Recently, for instance, several of the Buddhist women took lessons in sewing at a nearby public school together.

Although the acculturation changes have contributed to the social cohesion of the Buddhists themselves by reinforcing the common sentiments of the Buddhists, this cohesiveness can be interpreted as dysfunctional for the X\_\_\_\_\_ society as a whole. The researcher draws this conclusion for the following two reasons. First, the Buddhist religion by contributing to the social

cohesiveness of the Buddhists has reinforced the Buddhists' beliefs that their religion somehow has a better answer to the mysteries of life than the Mormon religion. In this way it has reinforced ethnocentrism or the tendency for the Buddhists to think of the Mormon religion as somehow odd and peculiar. To support these findings the following cases are cited. One Buddhist could not understand why one elderly woman who recently died could not go to the Mormon Temple just because she drank coffee to soothe her headaches. Also, in speaking to several Buddhists at a church social, the Buddhists expressed difficulty in comprehending and accepting the fact that it is necessary for the Mormons to go to church so often. Although these ethnocentric inclinations of the Buddhists are primarily covert, they do put a strain on the social relationship between the Buddhists and Mormons by keeping the Buddhists from more fully understanding their Mormon neighbors. Hence, the Buddhist religion, by contributing to the cohesiveness of the Buddhists, keeps them from more fully understanding their Mormon neighbors and from a more ideal type of consensus which would contribute greatly to the social cohesion of the Buddhists and Mormons. (It should be noted that this is a major dysfunction of all religions.)

The Buddhist religion is also dysfunctional in that it promotes racial segregation. It, of course, does not do this intentionally. It is rather the result of the fact that the Buddhist religion originated in Eastern cultures and has not been attractive to the Americans who have been socialized in the Christian tradition. The main adherents of the X\_\_\_ Buddhist Church, therefore, are of Mongoloid descent. The Buddhist religion thus, by contributing to the cohesiveness of the Buddhists, accents the racial separateness of the Japanese-



American Buddhists and the American Mormons who are primarily Caucasians, and thus, aggravates the strains in social relationships which commonly are a result of racial differences.

It can be concluded that the acculturation changes in the Buddhist religion have both been positive and negative with respect to the social cohesion of X\_\_\_\_. Many of the changes have been positive in that they have reinforced the common sentiments of X\_\_\_\_. The acculturation changes have also been positive in that they have reinforced the common sentiments of the Buddhists themselves and have provided them with the social cohesion necessary for the existence of the Buddhist society. On the other hand, the Buddhist religion by providing social cohesion for the Buddhist group, is also dysfunctional for two reasons: (1) It contributes to ethnocentrism, and (2) it promotes racial segregation. Both these dysfunctions take away from a more ideal kind of social cohesion in X\_\_\_\_.

#### Secularization analysis

Besides analyzing the general changes which have occurred in the acculturation process and the functional significance of these changes, one can also analyze these changes in terms of the secularization process. This section will, therefore, seek to demonstrate what the response of the Buddhist society in X\_\_\_\_ has been with regard to the secularization process.

Redfield (1947) types the folk society as small, isolated, homogeneous, and nonliterate. This Utah Buddhist society of the early 1900's can be correctly considered a folk society in that it met Redfield's requisites. The Buddhist society was small and had its beginnings with only a few individuals in

X\_\_\_\_. Most of the Buddhists were isolated in that they did not speak, write, or read English. Also, they lived on farms in a sparsely populated rural area. The Buddhists were homogeneous too. They were all farmers and they all shared the Buddhist faith of their ancestors. They were also a sacred society in that the traditional was not challenged. In their religious practices, for example, the Buddhists would put food on the graves of their deceased ancestors. Although this was done on Memorial Day, which is an American holiday, the Buddhists still were following the practices of a well-established tradition. The fact that the traditional was not readily questioned was also made evident in the behavior of the Nisei. The Nisei males, for example, took over the farms of the Issei, which is customary in Japanese families. The Nisei males also kept their Buddhist faith and married women who were either Buddhist or who were willing to become Buddhists.

Although the early Buddhist society was more closely akin to the sacred society in its character, the Buddhists society in X\_\_\_\_ today is more like the secular society. The Nisei, for example, do not accept many of the traditional ways of the Issei. They do not expect their children to take over their farms and also do not carry on the Buddhist tradition of putting food on the graves of their deceased ancestors. There are, of course, some traditional ideas which the Issei still ideally hold but in respect to the Sansei and these ideals, they have a very permissive attitude. They would, for instance, like to see their children marry their own kind in both race and religion, but the Nisei rarely make an issue of the matter if the Sansei prefer to do otherwise.

The Sansei, or course, have in many cases rejected the traditional. Many have rejected the Buddhist faith for either the Christian faith or no faith at all. Even the young Sansei, who have not yet left home, challenge their religion in Sunday school. They may ask, for example, why they worship Buddha who is an ancient figure from a far-off land. The one traditional way which seems to have been most accepted by the Sansei is that of marrying within their race. It is too early, however, to make a final statement to this effect, as many of the Sansei have not come of marrying age yet.

The Buddhist society has also followed the pattern of becoming less isolated and more heterogeneous, a pattern which most societies, according to Redfield (1947), follow in becoming more secular. Today, both the Nisei and Sansei speak English and are not isolated in terms of language whatever. Many live in X\_\_\_\_, in fact, which is a town in which the houses are situated quite close to one another. The Nisei are also more heterogeneous than their Issei parents. Most are still farmers but a few operate business establishments. Also, some of the farmers take on an occasional part-time job and many of the wives of the farmers work outside the home as well.

The above analysis of the Buddhist society in X\_\_\_\_ has shown in a very general way that the Buddhists have become quite secular over the years. An attempt will now be made to reach the same conclusion by analyzing the Buddhist society in respect to one specific aspect of their religious ideology—the concept of Nirvana.

The literal meaning of Nirvana, as was mentioned previously, is the extinction of desire or thirst; and a good Buddhist strives for Nirvana or

Enlightenment by extinguishing his desires (Tsuji T., n.d.) This extinction of desire, however, is not compatible with the secular values of American society. The values of American society have been tremendously influenced by the Protestant Ethic or the "ideas and norms which stress the positive value of diligent work at an occupation that is socially and individually beneficial." (Hoult, 1969, p. 254) Although the Protestants of the past can be said to have been achievement-oriented and consumption-oriented for religious purposes, the Protestant Ethic can be said to be "suffocating from the crushing weight of its own successes." (Cuzzort, 1969, p. 58) American society has thus become an achievement-oriented society for the consumption of goods for their own sake. American Protestants, no doubt an outgrowth of the Protestant Ethic, have been particularly concerned with achievement and consumption (Yinger, 1970). In terms of economic success, however, Catholics "have moved from a position clearly below that of white Protestants to one of equality or slight advantage." (Yinger, 1970, p. 396) It can be said, therefore, that Catholics have also become very "Protestant" or achievement-oriented and consumption-oriented. In view of what has been happening to the Catholics, the researcher suggests that there is an analogy between what has happened to the Catholics and what is happening to the American Buddhists in their confrontation with Protestantism and American values.

Do the Buddhists strive avidly to extinguish their desires in order to experience Nirvana or have the Buddhists, like the Catholics, become more concerned with achievement and consumption? The researcher concludes that the Buddhists have been affected by the secularization process and do not

diligently seek Nirvana in the traditional sense for the following two reasons. First, most of the Nisei have a high school education. This is certainly indicative of a desire to achieve, as most minority group members in the past, have not completed high school. The Sansei too are achievement-oriented. In the families that the researcher had contact with and in which there were children of college age, at least one child in every family was in college. Furthermore, some of the Sansei even aspire to do graduate work. The Nisei also are very anxious for the Sansei to succeed in college and try to help them by paying for their college expenses. The comment made by one Nisei that she finds it very difficult to attend worship services (which at the time were held once a month) because she feels obligated to wash, iron, and visit with her college sons when they come home can be construed to show the importance that some Nisei attach to the educational achievement of their children.

Second, the Buddhists can be considered achievement-oriented in the economic sense. One Buddhist, for example, has a very large farm on which he grows vegetables and raises cattle. To run his farm, he finds it necessary to hire migrant workers in the summer and rent land in a nearby valley to graze his cattle. He also has a part-time job in the winter months and his wife works as well. He finds himself "running from morning until night." Although this example may be atypical, the Buddhists in general are determined to succeed as farmers. The fact that many of the wives of the farmers work also shows the desire for economic achievement. One Nisei female, for instance, works 6 days a week so that her family can enjoy the comfort of a new home and its modern conveniences.

It would appear from the above account that the Buddhists have succumbed to the secular values of American society. It is of interest, therefore, to know how the Buddhists rationalize the concept of Nirvana in view of their secular inclinations. To begin, most of the Buddhists readily admit that Nirvana is their ultimate goal. They do not, however, all conceive of this goal as somehow incompatible with the values of American society. One Buddhist, for example, sees the attainment of Nirvana as "avoiding extremes" or excesses--such as excessive smoking or drinking. He furthermore does not think that the values of American society themselves necessarily present any difficulties to achieving Nirvana. Other Buddhists, however, see American society as a definite obstacle toward achieving Nirvana. One Buddhist said that she believes that the American values of achievement and consumption are definitely not aiding the attainment of Nirvana; but despite human failings, the Buddhists are to strive toward Nirvana. Another Buddhist said that she realizes that she, like most Americans, is very caught up with the American values of achievement and consumption. She realizes further that she probably will never attain Nirvana on this earth and doubts if any of the Buddhists in the X\_\_\_ Church will.

It would appear that Nirvana is still the basic manifest goal of the Buddhists. The Buddhists, however, are aware of the fact that they are like most Americans and have secular goals that do not help them reach Nirvana. They believe, however, that they should still strive toward Nirvana by taking the "middle way" of Gautama Buddha, even though they may never attain Nirvana on this earth. They furthermore attribute their inability to attain Nirvana as a

consequence of human nature. It would appear, therefore, that the Buddhists have rationalized the concept of Nirvana to meet their secular American values. This, therefore, would seem to be a case of secularization.

In conclusion, the Buddhist society has become more and more secular as time has passed. This trend furthermore does not appear to be ending, as the Sansei are becoming even less isolated, more heterogeneous, less emotionally involved in the Buddhist society, and more achievement-oriented and consumption-oriented than the Nisei.

CHAPTER VI  
SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The main purpose of the study was to extend the field of knowledge of American Buddhism, since there have been few sociological studies conducted in this area of religious behavior. To enable the researcher to fulfill this goal, the members of the X\_\_\_\_ Buddhist Church in a rural town in Utah were chosen as the principal subjects of this study. The objectives of the study were as follows: (1) To present a description of Buddhism in modern Japan, (2) to present a description of the beliefs and practices of the Buddhists in the X\_\_\_\_ Church in Utah, and (3) to give a sociological interpretation of American Buddhism in terms of the acculturation theory, functional theory, and secularization theory.

As a background for the reader, one chapter was presented on Buddhism. It included the origin and traditional beliefs of Buddhism as well as the introduction of Buddhism to Japan and America.

The method used in this study to gather the data was the anthropological method and a description of this method, as well as a detailed account of the researcher's experiences in gathering the data, were set down. The data gathered were analyzed in terms of the theoretical framework in the review of literature. Finally, a presentation of the data as well as an analysis of the data



were made. First of all, descriptions were given of modern Japanese Buddhism and American Buddhism in X\_\_\_\_, Utah as background information for the sociological analysis of American Buddhism. The three final sections, therefore, included an analysis of American Buddhism in terms of acculturation changes, the functional significance of the acculturation changes, and the secularization process.

### Findings

The findings of this study can be listed as follows:

- (1) Buddhism in America, as represented by the X\_\_\_\_ Buddhist Church in Utah, has definitely undergone changes which are a result of acculturation. Buddhism in America is becoming American Buddhism, just as Buddhism in Japan became Japanese Buddhism. In both cases, the direct influence of the respective cultures is evident.
- (2) The acculturation changes in the X\_\_\_\_ Buddhist Church have been significant in that they have allowed the Buddhist religion to reinforce the norms and values of the X\_\_\_\_ society, and in this way have promoted social cohesion. Also, the acculturation changes have made the Buddhist religion more acceptable to the Buddhists, living in the American rural scene, and yet, have provided the common sentiments necessary for the social cohesion of the Buddhist group itself. In this way it has been positively functional for the Buddhists. The contribution of the Buddhist religion to the

cohesiveness of the Buddhist group, however, has also been dysfunctional for the following two reasons: (1) It contributes to the ethnocentrism of the Buddhists, and (2) it accentuates racial discrimination, prejudice, and segregation. In these ways the Buddhist religion puts a strain on the social relationship of the Buddhists and Mormons in X\_\_\_\_ and prevents a more ideal condition of total social cohesiveness.

- (3) The secularization process has affected the Buddhist society in X\_\_\_\_, Utah. The Buddhist society is definitely more secular than it was in the past, and all indications are that the secularization process will continue to affect the Buddhist society. It probably can even be safely said that, in the future; the Buddhist society in X\_\_\_\_, Utah will cease to exist as a consequence of the secularization process.

### Recommendations

In making suggestions for future studies, the researcher urges strongly that a study similar to this one be carried out in an urban setting. A comparison could then be made to ascertain whether there is a difference between Buddhism in the urban and rural settings. A few side lights, which the researcher picked up in this study, would suggest that there are differences and a more in depth investigation could be fruitful.

The researcher would like also to recommend a study in which perhaps the effects of Buddhism on American culture could be determined.

Acculturation is a two-way street even if there is a small and "inferior" group doing most of the receiving. The researcher did find, for example, that some American Caucasians are attracted to Buddhism, and it would be interesting to find out who these individuals are, what they are like, and why they are attracted to Buddhism.

It would also be of interest to do a follow-up study on those Buddhists who have been converted to the Christian faith. Possible causes, for instance, could be demonstrated as to why the Buddhists become Christians. The researcher in this study has found that one's peers do influence such a decision.

Finally, it is suggested that a quantitative study be attempted in one or in all the areas studied in this paper. Such a study could validate the findings in this study.

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