

# 28 Zonkaku: On Destroying the False and Revealing the Correct (1344)

Introduced and translated by Christoph Kleine

## Introduction

Zonkaku 存覺 (1290–1373), the author of *Haja kenshō shō* 破邪顯正鈔 – the text reproduced in translated excerpts below – was the eldest son of Kakunyo 覺如 (1270–1351), the third head (*monshu* 門主) of the family mausoleum, which later became the Honganji Temple in Kyoto, and thus a great-grandson of Shinran, the founder of the True Pure Land School. In 1353, Zonkaku moved to Imakoji, north of Ōtani, in Eastern Kyōto, where he lectured on Shinran’s main work, the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. Although he did not succeed to the position of caretaker of the mausoleum, he contributed much to the doctrinal development of the community.

The selection from the *Haja kenshō shō* offered here has become a *locus classicus* within the Shinshū tradition, regarding the interpretation of the relationship between the Buddha Dharma and the ruler’s law. Compared to the way the paradigm was interpreted by representatives of the established Buddhist institutions, such as the clergy of the Kōfukuji and Enryakuji, Zonkaku’s interpretation features some significant innovations. As a representative of a marginalised and often persecuted Buddhist movement, widely stigmatised by the establishment as heterodoxy, Zonkaku’s main concern is to oblige his own followers to be loyal to the secular authorities, and to obey the laws of the ruler. The clergy of the powerful temples had, above all, emphasised the importance of a largely autonomous Buddha Dharma that they had curated for the maintenance of state order, thus persuading state institutions to protect Buddhist institutions. Zonkaku’s writings have a completely different focus, turning the relationship on its head: he wants to convince the followers of Pure Land Buddhism, some of whom were suspected to tend towards insubordination, that the Buddha Dharma can only be practised under conditions of social peace and state order. It is thus entirely in the interests of the Buddha Dharma to protect and preserve the ruler’s law – and practitioners of Buddhism should be grateful for the blessings of peace and prosperity that they receive from the rulers. The established clergy had tended to argue the other way round – that it was in the interests of the state (i.e. the ruler’s law) to protect Buddhism from internal and external enemies.

Moreover, there are other positions in Zonkaku’s text, only hinted at here, which were further elaborated into regular *topoi* within the Shinshū discourse about the in-

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terdependence of the two nomospheres, over the following centuries. While the established clergy regarded the Buddha Dharma as a pillar of *public* order, in Zonkaku's writings we find the first approaches to making Buddhism a matter of *personal* sentiment, the basis of individual cognitive and normative orientation. A process of individualisation and privatisation is emerging here – steps towards a 'religionisation' of Buddhism. The Buddha Dharma is private and internal; the ruler's law is public and external. In the event of conflict between the two nomospheres, Shinshū believers should obey the ruler's laws, without inwardly abandoning their belief in the Buddha Dharma. This is not to say that the Buddha Dharma is thus irrelevant to public policy. As a means of domesticating the masses via moral instruction, the Buddha Dharma remains an indispensable element of social peace and political stability. At the same time, however, a certain 'disenchantment' is emerging, with regard to the concrete benefits of the Buddha Dharma to the ruler's nomosphere. Conservative representatives of the established schools, as well as reformers such as Nichiren, had primarily argued that Buddhism's impact on the state was via spiritual beings that would leave Japan's shores in the event of the Dharma's decline, leaving the country to the pernicious influence of demons; Zonkaku, by contrast, saw Buddhism as protecting the state primarily through its civilising influence on the people.

## Bibliographical Information

The translation from the classical Japanese given here is based on this edition:

Shiji Senkō Sho'in 四時染香書院, ed. "Haja kenshō shō 破邪顯正鈔" [On Destroying the False and Revealing the Correct]. In *Shinshū kana shōgyō* 眞宗假名聖教. Tokyo: Shiji Senkō Sho'in, 1889; 549–50.

Page numbers given in square brackets refer to this edition.

An edition consulted for comparative purposes can be found in:

Ōtani Kōson 大谷光尊, ed. *Wago Shinshū Hōyō* 和語眞宗法要. Vol. 3. Kyoto: Bunnyo, 1878; 39–40.

## Translation by Christoph Kleine

### On the Fact That When the Buddha's Law is Destroyed, This Will Be the Cause for the Ruler's Law Being Disregarded

The Buddha's Law and the ruler's law are a single law with two aspects (*ichisō no hō* 一雙ノ法), like the two wings of a bird, or the two wheels of a cart. It is untenable that even one should be lacking. Therefore, one protects the ruler's law by means of the Buddha's Law, and one reveres the Buddha's Law by means of the ruler's law [. . . p. 549/550 . . .]

After being born again and again within the six realms, being now born in a human body is something we should be extremely happy about. We depend on the grace of the country's rulers, who follow each other generation after generation. The recent imperial grace has been particularly serendipitous. Whether attached to the mundane (*seken* 世間) or to the supra-mundane (*shusse* 出世), we look up to beg for grace and favours. How could we disregard the ruler's law? All the more so for practitioners of the exclusive Buddha-recollection (*senju nenbutsu no gyōja* 専修念佛ノ行者), who, wherever they may live, when they drink even a single drop or receive even a single meal, believe that, in general, it is thanks to the favour of the nobles [of the capital and the warrior leaders of] the Kantō [region], and know that, specifically, it is due to the grace of their local lords and estate stewards. [. . . p. 550/551 . . .]

What is causing trouble for the people is disregard for the ruler's law. And what obstructs Buddha-recollection is the demise of the Buddha's Law. How are prayers for the ruler's law to be offered [under such circumstances]? And on what basis [p. 551/552] can worship of the Buddha's Law be expressed?