

## From Pearl Harbor to 9/11

*Lessons from the Internment of Japanese American Buddhists*

Buddhist priests, classified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as potentially the most dangerous Japanese aliens, were among the first groups arrested by government officials following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.<sup>1</sup> Shinobu Matsuura's husband, the Reverend Issei Matsuura, was one such Buddhist priest. He was taken by the FBI in the early hours of the morning and did not know if or when he would see his family again. As she recalled, "February 18, 1942, early morning, still in our night-clothes and huddled by the heater, we listened grimly to the news over the radio. There was a loud rapping on the back door. Three men stood there. They were the FBI. 'We came to arrest Rev. Matsuura,' said one, as they came through the door. . . . I was instructed to pack a change of clothing for my husband. Hurriedly, I put his underwear and toiletries in a bag. Separately, I wrapped his koromo and kesa, *seiten* and *Kanmuryojukyo* sutra."<sup>2</sup>

Japanese American Buddhist priests of all denominations, along with Shinto priests, were sent to "alien enemy" camps established by the U.S. Department of Justice in Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Crystal City, Texas. Unlike Japanese American Christian priests and ministers, Buddhist priests were closely associated with Japan and thus with potentially subversive activity. As Bob Kumamoto has noted, "The 'peculiarity' of Eastern languages, religions, customs, and physical appearance had always separated the Japanese from the mainstream of American society. Once considered inferior and insignificant, these ethnic distinctions were now considered by the government as anti-American, potentially subversive and somehow threatening to American security."<sup>3</sup> This perception that Buddhists (in contrast to Christians) were more Japanese than American was held not only by the FBI and the Wartime Relocation Authority (WRA) but also by the public at large, including some members of the Japanese American community. The history of Japanese American

Buddhism during World War II, in fact, centers on this question of identity, both ethnic and religious.

This chapter explores the modes of accommodation and resistance that first-generation Japanese Americans (issei) and their children (nisei and kibe) expressed through their Buddhist identity in the days following Pearl Harbor and in the years of their incarceration in detention camps. The chapter also includes preliminary observations about these processes of religious identity among members of minority religions in America, especially during wartime, by comparing Japanese American Buddhist experiences with the changing landscape for Muslims, Sikhs, and people with ethnic heritages from south Asia and the Middle East after the terrorist incidents of 9/11.

The first Japanese Buddhist priests arrived in Hawaii and the U.S. mainland in the 1890s to minister to the first-generation issei. Most issei were Buddhists who had initially immigrated to Hawaii to work on plantations and to the mainland as contract laborers for railroad, lumber, mining, and cannery companies as well as on farms. In 1900, the Japanese immigrant population had risen to 24,326, most of them transient men. In 1930, however, the Japanese American population had grown to 138,834 and increasingly was composed of families with stable jobs and even small businesses.<sup>4</sup> By the eve of the war, Buddhist temples functioned as both religious and community centers in all areas where Japanese Americans were concentrated, especially in California. Buddhist priests of the Jōdo, Jōdo Shin, Nichiren, Shingon, and Sōtō Zen sects were sent by their respective headquarter temples in Japan to serve as "missionaries" in the United States.

The FBI's targeting of Buddhist priests as potential subversives had little to do with the fact that Buddhist temples, especially those of the Jōdo Shin tradition, had participated in fund-raising campaigns for the Imperial Japanese Army in Manchuria.<sup>5</sup> Japanese American Buddhist ties to Japanese military or intelligence agencies, according to FBI surveillance records, were fairly tenuous. Alan Hynd's "exposé" of the Japanese-German spy network in the years immediately preceding the war, *Betrayal from the East: The Inside Story of Japanese Spies in America*, could cite only one incident. The FBI apparently suspected the Los Angeles Kōyasan Buddhist Temple of holding spy meetings with members of the Japanese consulate, with Sachiko Furusawa (an adviser to the Temple's Women's Society and wife of a doctor who apparently had ties to German spies), and with other unidentified figures. At one particular meeting, the FBI suspected that the participants had discussed placing detonation devices on American naval ships.<sup>6</sup> In reality, however, the FBI had only unsus-

ported notions that Buddhist priests were more pro-Japan than other members of the Japanese American community; nevertheless, the FBI regarded the priests as "known dangerous Group A suspects," along with employees of the Japanese consulate, fishermen, and influential businessmen.<sup>7</sup> The FBI's decision to target Buddhist priests can be traced primarily to the conflation of Buddhism with state Shinto, which emphasized worship of the emperor as a deity and loyalty to the Japanese imperial empire. Not until the postwar period would Americans see Japanese Buddhism as a distinct tradition.

Newspaper editors and members of Congress accused all Japanese, including Japanese American children, of being loyal to the Japanese government and called for their removal from the West Coast. After their priests were taken away to "enemy alien" camps, the remaining members of Buddhist temples tried their best to continue religious services as well as community affairs. For example, the wives of priests and nonordained temple leaders took on duties that priests previously had performed exclusively.<sup>8</sup>

By February 1942, the U.S. government set in motion the large-scale incarceration of the broader Japanese American community. On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which ultimately led to the designation of restricted military zones on the West Coast and the subsequent removal of all persons of Japanese ancestry from those areas. In the ensuing months, the atmosphere in the community was one of anxiety, uncertainty, and fear. Immediately following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Buddhist Mission of North America (the predecessor of the Jōdo Shin Buddhist Churches of America) sent a notice to its members:

Sirs, REGISTER FOR CIVILIAN DEFENSE—Buddhists! Your loyalty and devotion to the cause of the United States of America in her war against aggressor nations of the Axis, must be translated into action. Do your part unflinchingly in the defense of the STARS AND STRIPES. Acquaint yourself with Air Raid Rules! Mobilize your energies to facilitate America's purpose! Pledge your services unreservedly to the officials and authorities of our country, the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. With the blessings of Buddha, Rev. K. Kumata (Buddhist Mission of North America).<sup>9</sup>

The major Buddhist organizations tried to provide leadership and convey a strong sense of loyalty to the United States. They urged Japanese Americans to cooperate with the authorities when rumors circulated about forcible removal from the West Coast: "Buddhists with citizenship in America: Remember the spirit of loyalty to your country and filial piety which you have learned through

the teachings of the Buddha. . . . Young Buddhists in Prohibited Areas: Cooperate with your local J[apanese] A[merican] C[itizens] L[eague] Chapter in all problems pertaining to the evacuation. With the Blessings of the Buddha, Rev. Kumata (Buddhist Mission of America)."<sup>10</sup>

During this period of war hysteria, some Buddhists converted to Christianity, while others burned Japanese-language books and other personal Japanese cultural artifacts in an attempt to destroy, literally and symbolically, their Japaneseness while simultaneously demonstrating their Americanness.<sup>11</sup> Mary Nagatomi, for example, remembers her parents telling her to go to the wood stove used for the family bath to burn everything in the household with "Made in Japan" on it, including her favorite traditional Japanese doll set. The one item the family members could not bring themselves to burn was a set of Buddhist sutras, which the father buried after wrapping the scriptures in kimono cloth, placing them in a metal rice-cracker box, and using a backhoe to dig a hole for them on the family farm. These sacred texts remain buried somewhere in central California, a silent testimony to the enduring Buddhist identity of one family, testimony that could not be completely obliterated despite the seeming necessity of doing so.<sup>12</sup>

The rush to Christian conversion, ironically, could be part of a Japanese tradition of subsuming religious identity under political or national identity. But conversions were also born of fear of persecution by neighbors and the government, and many converts returned to the Buddhist fold during the camp years.

When stories began to circulate throughout the community that Buddhists would be treated more harshly than Christians, Buddhist leaders sent out a letter:

And contrary to all rumors, those in official positions have assured us that unreasonable persecution shall never be brought against Buddhism or Buddhists. It is with great sorrow then that there have been noted several cases of inferiority complexes, brought about by false tales, wherein Buddhist religious organizations have been disbanded and Buddhists have destroyed or hidden family altars while others have withdrawn from church membership. . . . Buddhists! With true Faith in the Buddha, let us serve our country, the United States of America, in silence. With the Blessings of the Buddha, Rev. Kumata (Buddhist Churches of America).<sup>13</sup>

Buddhists experiencing internal conflict regarding their identity and loyalty soon had to face the reality that they were going to be uprooted from their

communities. Japanese Americans in the relocation centers  
number at one of the sixty-four Civil Control stations; they then would have  
between seven and ten days to sell or store their property. They could take only  
what they could carry by hand to the camps. Without due process of law, more  
than 110,000 Japanese Americans ultimately were herded to "assembly cen-  
ters" before being imprisoned at one of ten so-called permanent relocation  
centers:

Arise, Arise, all Buddha's soldiers true, and take your stand upon the  
rock of Truth!  
The Holy Law by Lord Buddha taught everyone to endure  
And all who journey by its Light shall reach Nirvana's shore  
In love we stand, by Truth set free, Brothers of Him who found true  
liberty.<sup>14</sup>

Japanese American Buddhists faced a crisis of identity and faith as they  
endured a harsh journey to the internment camps and the realities of the  
desert heat, coupled with the knowledge that they were prisoners in their own  
land. Within the camps, surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards, arose  
the question of what it means to be simultaneously American and Buddhist.  
What is an American Buddhist?

Buddhist life in the camps revolved around the barrack "churches," which  
held religious services and education classes (in some cases in mess halls  
and recreation buildings), especially on Sundays. According to the Rever-  
end Arthur Takemoto, a young man during the internment period, Buddhist  
teachings such as those on suffering and patience helped alleviate the pain  
and confusion that many residents faced: "Understanding the basic tenets of  
Buddhism orients people to understand the reality of life, that things don't  
go the way we want them to go. This becomes *dukkha*, suffering and pain.  
To be able to accept a situation as it is means we could tolerate it more."<sup>15</sup>

The WRA forced various Buddhist sects to cooperate with each other, which  
meant that doctrinal differences were often ignored in favor of a shared,  
transsectarian Buddhism. At times, this process involved finding common  
ground in areas such as chanting "Namu Butsu" (Homage to the Buddha)  
instead of the various sects' unique chants: "Namu Amida Butsu" (Jôdo Shin);  
"Namu Daishi Henjô Kongô" (Shingon); and "Namu Myôhô Renge Kyô"  
(Nichiren).<sup>16</sup> While this phenomenon represented, as Stephen Prothero has  
suggested, more of an "ecumenism of circumstance"—reflecting the lack of  
facilities and government categorization for religious worship rather than

a conscious choice—this transsectarianism nevertheless reflects an impulse within Japanese American Buddhism, exemplified by priests such as Yemyô Imamura, toward a form of American Buddhism that transcends Japanese sectarian factionalism.

The Buddhist churches in the camps held annual festivals and services for events such as Obon, Higan, and the Buddha's birthday as well as funerals, memorial services, and weddings for Buddhist families. The traditional ritual life of Japanese Buddhism continued in the camp. Having left behind family Buddhist altars (*butsudan*) enshrining their ancestors, Buddhists resorted to collecting odd pieces of wood in the desert to make altars.<sup>17</sup> The lack of officiants to carry out funerary and memorial services forced Buddhist priests, regardless of sect, to maintain all family necrologies and bestow posthumous names traditionally given to the dead at funerals, two crucial aspects of funerary Buddhism focused on the ancestors in traditional Japanese Buddhism. For example, when a Jôdo Shin priest, Nagatomi Shinjô, conducted the funeral for the father of the Tayama family, Sôtô Zen Buddhists at the Manzanar Camp, he entered the deceased's posthumous name in the family necrology with this note:

Date: 1942, Dec. 24 (deceased)

Dharma Name: SHAKU Saishô'in Hôden; Given Name: Tayama Saki

Age at death: 61

Present address: Death Valley CC; Former address: Los Angeles; Place of death: Manzanar

Japanese Place of Origin: Yamaguchi Pref.

Officiant: Nagatomi Shinjô; Head Mourner: Tayama Suguru; Notes: Zenshû (Sôtôshû) believer.<sup>18</sup>

The importance of maintaining the Japanese custom of ancestral veneration was so strong that sectarian concerns for each family, while normally crucial for the proper performance of the traditional funeral and the selection of the posthumous name, were set aside in this time of crisis. What mattered was simply to provide funerary rites. In this way, Buddhism not only provided a spiritual refuge for internees but also served the social function of maintaining family and communal cohesion through ancestral and life-cycle rituals and traditional Japanese festivals and ceremonies.

While Buddhism was, in this sense, a repository of Japanese traditions, it was also forced to operate in the context of an Americanization program

promoted by the WRA. This program was organized to accommodate Japanese and allow them to demonstrate loyalty to the United States.<sup>19</sup> According to the *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States (1943)* prepared by the Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives Special Committee on Un-American Activities, camp administrators should promote recreational activities such as baseball and basketball as well as encourage internees to join groups such as the Boy and Girl Scouts and the YMCA/YWCA.<sup>20</sup> Being Buddhist obviously was not listed as a method of demonstrating loyalty, but Buddhist groups made their own attempts at Americanization.

In May 1944, the name of the largest Buddhist organization in the Topaz Camp was changed from the Buddhist Mission of North America (BMNA) to the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) to give the organization a more Christian-sounding name. The camp experience, however, only accelerated an assimilation process that had already begun prior to the war.<sup>21</sup> The swastika symbol, often used on Buddhist temple stationery or on temple equipment prior to the internment, disappeared and was replaced almost universally by the dharma wheel. In addition to increased use of English at the barrack churches, new hymnals (the most widely used of which was *A Book of Ceremonies for Use of Buddhists at Gatherings*) were created with the assistance of several Euro-American supporters outside the camps, including American convert Julius Goldwater, to lend the BCA a more Christian (and thus American) format for services. By singing *gathas* as hymns, including Dorothy Hunt's "Onward Buddhist Soldiers" (a section of which was quoted earlier), Buddhists within the camp created a new medium for Americanizing Buddhism. They did so, however, in a way that honored their Buddhist traditions while simultaneously demonstrating loyalty to the United States. The young members of the community, having studied the Buddhist "Junior Catechism," for example, used a Christian medium to maintain Buddhist identity. Many of these elements constitute what might be called the Protestantization of Buddhism, which Prothero has identified as parallel to the process of Americanization.<sup>22</sup>

America was also inscribed into the Buddhist iconographical landscape when members of the Oregon Buddhist Church re-carved their temple's main altarpiece, Mount Sumeru (the axis mundi of Buddhist cosmology that lies below a Buddha figure in traditional Jōdo Shin temple altars), to resemble nearby Mount Hood. Here, Buddhists sacralized the American landscape by affirming their home state's symbol as their true home as Oregonians. Such actions function in a way similar to Hindus' identification of the Mississippi

River as the Ganges, a method that, as Vasudha Narayanan argues in her chapter in this volume, makes America "home" both geographically and religiously.

Most importantly, the Young Buddhist Association (YBA) supported the all-nisei 100th/442nd Combat Regiment, in which second-generation Japanese Americans fought in Europe to demonstrate their loyalty to America.<sup>23</sup> As David Yoo has suggested, the nisei "embraced the very markers of racial and religious difference used against them. The faith of their mothers and fathers enabled the second generation to affirm their ancestry and, at the same time, lay claim to their status as Americans. No single definition emerged, but religion offered Nisei Buddhists (also known as Bussei) valuable space to become ethnic Americans."<sup>24</sup> These volunteers were encouraged by many Buddhist priests and the YBAs as well as by army-recognized Buddhist chaplains. (Buddhist chaplains were not allowed in the field in Europe but were permitted in the boot camps before the soldiers were deployed.)

Nevertheless, many Japanese American soldiers had a hard time grappling with the issue of identity, faced as they were with the irony of fighting for a country in the name of freedom while that same country deprived their parents and siblings of the same freedom. One such Buddhist soldier wrote to his parents in broken Japanese the night before leaving boot camp for the European front:

Dear Mama and Papa. It's me. Tonight, I'm finally being sent to the front. Thank you for loving me all these years. Mama, and Papa too, there's no need to worry. I'll be back soon. I'll rush back to where you are just as soon as I get back. Both of you stay in good health till then, all right? Since everything's set to go, I've got nothing else left to say except good-bye. Take care, Mama and Papa. Good-bye, good-bye. Oh wait, I'd forgotten, there is something else, Mama. That story, you know, the one you used to tell me all the time when I was a kid. The story about the Buddha. I remember that really well, so you can put your mind at ease. The Buddha will always be with me, even when I'm sent to the front. I'm not sad at all because the Buddha will protect me. Mama and Papa, don't worry about me because I remember that story really well. Well, I've got to be off, so you two take care of yourselves. Good-bye.<sup>25</sup>

This letter, given to a Buddhist priest by the parents for safekeeping, reassured them that their son remembered his Buddhist roots and the power of the Buddha to protect believers. The power of the Buddha thus extended ever

eastward, across the Pacific from Japan to America, and then east again, across the Atlantic, from America to Europe.

When the war ended and the internees began reintegrating into American society, Buddhist temples such as the Senshin Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles and the San Jose Buddhist Church continued the work of the dharma by serving as hostels for those who could not immediately find housing and jobs. The second-generation nisei of the BCA also organized a Golden Jubilee Festival in 1948 to celebrate the fifty years since the founding of the organization. As Michael Masatsugu has noted, the celebration, which would gather thousands to formalize the changes that had taken place in the camp, emphasized the struggle of issei Buddhist pioneers and the sacrifices of the nisei Buddhist war heroes.<sup>26</sup> Inscribing their forefathers into the landscape of the American West and honoring their brethren who had died in war to prove American loyalty, the organizers managed not only to solidify a new vision of what it meant to be an American Buddhist but also to garner mainstream media attention. *Life* magazine devoted several pages to the jubilee, with photos of two Buddhist priests in front of the Buddhist altar at the San Francisco Buddhist Church, a Bon Odori (a summertime Buddhist dance to placate and honor the spirits of the ancestors) at San Francisco's civic center, and a Caucasian convert cleric, Frank Udale, dressed in his priestly garb.<sup>27</sup>

As Buddhists attempted to find a place in mainstream American society, the English-speaking nisei also worked to gain a place for American Buddhism in the public sphere. They organized two closely related campaigns to remember the lives and sacrifices made by the many nisei servicemen who had served in the 100th/442nd in Europe or as translators and intelligence gatherers in the Pacific Theater's Military Intelligence Service. A war veteran and devout Buddhist, Tad Hirota, led a B for Buddhism campaign to have the army officially recognize Buddhists in the armed services by creating a B designation on dog tags. (During World War II, the military had only three official preferences: P for Protestant, C for Catholic, and H for Hebrew.) Coordinated with endorsements from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the Republican delegate from the territory of Hawaii, Joseph R. Farrington, Hirota contacted the army's chief chaplain, Major General Luther C. Miller. After some deliberation, a compromise was reached in 1949 that designated X to be used on dog tags for anyone not of the existing three religious preferences. Furthermore, an additional dog tag could be supplied by the soldier's church or temple that would positively identify his religion. The National Young Buddhist Coordinating Council subsequently campaigned for

a Buddhist symbol to be placed on the headstones of Buddhist veterans at national cemeteries. After petitions were sent to Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson, the army agreed late in 1949 to inscribe the "Buddhist emblem" for American soldiers of the Buddhist faith. These two campaigns represent an important legacy of the camps, testing both Japanese American Buddhist loyalty to America and America's loyalty to its Buddhist citizens.

Postwar Japanese American Buddhism was clearly marked by the Buddhism of the camps. Wartime Buddhism functioned both as a repository of Japanese cultural traditions and as a vehicle for becoming American. As Ihsan Bagby suggests in his chapter in this volume, wartime may clarify the stakes involved in articulating to the nation one's religious and ethnic identity as well as accelerate the processes of Americanization. Lacking significant postwar migration from Japan, the Japanese American community, especially in California, has diminished in size as outmarriage and other assimilative factors have increased. With many fourth- and fifth-generation Japanese Americans unable to speak Japanese or uninterested in Buddhist temple life, Buddhist temples have had to find new ways to maintain membership. The paradoxical task of maintaining religious identity through difference—both ethnic (Japanese) and religious (Buddhist)—while simultaneously developing an American identity was sharpened by the wartime incarceration but continues today. The legacy of the camps lives on.

While the long history of the Japanese American Buddhist experience obviously holds lessons for more recent Asian American immigrant Buddhist groups, one wonders if the war and incarceration experience cannot also inform and illuminate the recent unfolding of a "new religious America," as Diana Eck puts it.<sup>28</sup> In particular, one wonders whether the targeting and harassment of Muslim Americans, Arab Americans, and those who may look like those who were responsible for the 9/11 attacks (such as Sikhs and other south Asians) parallels the Japanese American experience following Pearl Harbor.

According to the Council on American-Islamic Relations, which was tracking anti-Muslim incidents long before 9/11, cases of discrimination and attacks have soared since that event.<sup>29</sup> Ethnic and religious profiling at airports and workplaces as well as physical violence (including the shooting of Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh gas station owner in Mesa, Arizona) recall the hate crimes and discrimination faced by Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor. Just as Japanese American Buddhist temples were vandalized and ancient Buddhist symbols, such as the swastikas (*manji*) that hung at temple doors, were rid-

died with shotgun fire by angry white neighbors. One saw an angry mob of three hundred people chanting "U.S.A., U.S.A." and marching on a mosque in Bridgeview, Illinois, right after 9/11. Whether it was the vandalizing of a Muslim bookstore in Alexandria, Virginia, on September 12, or someone shooting into a Dallas-area mosque, the Islamic Center of Irving, Islamic symbols quickly became targets for those caught up in war hysteria. "Visible religion," whether in dress or looks, combined with ethnic profiling has once again proved to be a factor in how American religious pluralism and tolerance are defined.

Just as hundreds of Buddhist priests were picked up by the FBI and hysterical claims were made that Buddhist bells were going to send Morse code messages to the Japanese navy, the post-9/11 period has seen its share of indiscriminate arrests of thousands of young Muslim "enemy aliens" as well as the targeting of Muslim charitable organizations accused of having terrorist links. Many have developed the same kind of loyalty strategies as Japanese Americans did following Pearl Harbor: calls by organizations such as the American Muslim Council to cooperate with the FBI and support the president or drives to donate blood for the victims of the World Trade Center. While the rush to conversion, a strategy followed by some Japanese American Buddhists, is not an option for many Muslims, not only Muslims but also Sikhs and Hindus have sought ways of demonstrating loyalty to America, such as flying American flags or toning down religious or ethnic differences.

Despite these parallels, the differences between Pearl Harbor Buddhists and 9/11 Muslims are striking. Following 9/11, the federal government did not adopt a policy of mass incarceration of Muslims. In the Japanese American case, not only "enemy aliens" but also Japanese American citizens—more than 110,000 of them, including babies at orphanages—were imprisoned without trial for the duration of the war as a national security threat. Indeed, President George W. Bush's September 17, 2001, speech at the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C., where he announced his dismay at harassment of Muslims, represented a clear attempt to disentangle American Muslims from the actions of individual terrorists. "Women who cover their heads in this country must feel comfortable going outside their homes. Moms who wear cover must not be intimidated in America," Bush stated. "That's not the America I know. That's not the America I value."<sup>31</sup> While the president's anti-hate-crime message must also be understood in the context of international politics (that is, the imperative that the U.S. "war on terrorism" not be anti-Islamic), his comments set the tone for a government stance against intolerance.<sup>32</sup> Indeed,

within days of 9/11, both the House and the Senate passed resolutions condemning bigotry and violence against Arab Americans, American Muslims, and Americans of south Asian origin and calling for the protection of their civil rights and liberties.<sup>33</sup> Such official proclamations of religious tolerance were not forthcoming in 1940s America.

In the sixty years since Pearl Harbor, America has changed dramatically for Japanese Americans. In a June 2000 White House ceremony, President Bill Clinton bestowed the military's highest award, the Medal of Honor, on twenty-two Asian American war veterans. Japanese American veterans of the 442nd Regimental Combat Unit and the 100th Battalion, such as Senator Daniel Inoue (D-Hawaii), were honored for their valor in war. This action clearly signaled that Japanese Americans are no longer seen as foreigners. The ceremony, which also honored veterans posthumously, included the Reverend Shojo Honda, a Buddhist priest from Kyoto who recited Buddhist scriptures for the dead soldiers in front of the president and the army brass. The Buddhist priest, once officially classified as disloyal to his country, can now appear in public as a legitimate religious figure.

Among those in the army hierarchy present at that ceremony was four-star general Eric Shinseki, who had assumed the U.S. Army's top job, becoming chief of staff in 1999. Japanese Americans such as General Shinseki, along with Norman Mineta, who in his capacity as secretary of transportation worked to secure aviation safety after 9/11, have been among the Bush administration's faces in the "war on terrorism." Japanese American and Buddhist occupation of such high-profile public positions demonstrates a significant shift in America's religious, social, and political life. In addition, a traditional Japanese Obon ceremony, an annual event to honor the recently deceased as well as one's ancestors who are believed to revisit the living, was held at Ground Zero. It represented once more an increased Buddhist presence in the American religious imagination. Organized by the Reverend T. Kenjitsu Nakagaki of the New York Buddhist Church and other Buddhist priests, the Hatsu-Bon Memorial Service honored the roughly twenty Japanese and Japanese Americans who died in the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center.<sup>34</sup>

While the camp experience appears to have accelerated these types of post-war assimilationist tendencies—wanting to belong and to appear loyal—a lingering suspicion of mass incarceration and the denial of civil liberties for Muslim Americans remains strong among Japanese Americans, especially after the FBI brought in five thousand men, primarily of Arab and south Asian descent, for questioning in the domestic "war on terror." Within two and a half

weeks of 9/11, TWO NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLES, "THE ONCE AGAIN... Internment" and "Recalling Internment and Saying 'Never Again,'" chronicled what many Japanese Americans felt was a special responsibility to guard against ethnic scapegoating.<sup>35</sup> Proclaiming that "we need to do everything that we wish good Americans had done 59 years ago," the executive director of the San Francisco Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, Paul Osaki, was one of many community leaders speaking out against violence and discrimination against Muslim Americans.<sup>36</sup> On September 19, Japanese American leaders coordinated an unprecedented gathering of ethnic and religious leaders, including those from the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the American Muslim Council, and the Council on American-Islamic Relations, to meet at the National Japanese American Memorial in Washington, D.C., and call for law enforcement officers and others to adequately address hate violence against religious and ethnic minorities.

Invoking the memory of the World War II incarceration experience, other leaders, such as the executive director of the Japanese American National Museum, Irene Hirano, have also been deeply involved in efforts to reach out to Arab and Muslim Americans, including the construction of a new Arab American national museum. Although the mass incarceration of Arab and Muslim Americans seems unlikely, on July 19, 2002, a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights raised the specter of internment camps for Arab Americans if additional terrorist attacks were to occur on American soil.<sup>37</sup> Despite the religious and political motivations for some Sikh and Hindu organizations to distance themselves from Muslims—itsself reminiscent of the attempts by Koreans and Chinese to distance themselves from the Japanese during World War II—Muslim Americans have found allies in many quarters, including among Japanese Americans. The irony here is that the Japanese American Buddhist camp experience, which shaped the impulse to demonstrate loyalty as well as to remain on the outside as a critical voice of injustice in the American project of democracy, has made many Japanese American Buddhists feel excluded from the post-9/11 religiopolitical reality. President George Bush's language of the "Abrahamic faiths" of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that form the "sacred canopy" of America, coupled with the snubbing of Buddhist representatives at official 9/11 memorial services, has rolled back decades of efforts to root Buddhism more firmly in the American religious landscape.

Many Japanese Americans took on the conflicted identity of being a Japanese American Buddhist in the crucible of war. One wonders if 9/11 will also turn out to be similarly significant for Muslim Americans as they struggle

with Americanization and resistance to it in their ethnic and religious identity formation.

#### NOTES

1. Both Buddhist and Shinto priests were classified in the A (most potentially subversive) "known dangerous" category of the FBI's "ABC list" of aliens targeted for arrest in case of war. See Peter Irons, *Justice at War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 22.
2. Shinobu Matsuura, *Higan: Compassionate Vow—Selected Writings of Shinobu Matsuura* (Berkeley: Matsuura Family, 1986), 63.
3. Bob Kumamoto, "The Search for Spies: American Counterintelligence and the Japanese American Community, 1931-1942," *Amerasia Journal* 6.2 (Fall 1979): 45-75.
4. For more on the demographics of the early immigrants, see Paul R. Spickard, *Japanese Americans: The Formation and Transformations of an Ethnic Group* (London: Prentice Hall, 1996), 33.
5. See the O-Series: Correspondence, Buddhist Churches of America Archives, San Francisco (hereafter cited as BCA Archives), letters regarding and receipts of the donations collected by Japanese American temples for the Imperial Japanese Army.
6. Alan Hynd, *Betrayal from the East: The Inside Story of Japanese Spies in America* (New York: McBride, 1943), 21, 130-36.
7. For more on the FBI classification lists, see Kumamoto, "Search for Spies," 58.
8. On the "deputation" of Buddhist ministers' wives and others to serve as officiants, see Deborah Malone, "Documents from BCA Archives Vital for Redress Case," *Wheel of Dharma*, May 1997, 3.
9. BCA Archives, Box 1B (Letters—"Register for Civilian Defense," December 12, 1941).
10. BCA Archives, Box 1B (Letters—"Evacuation of Aliens," February 9, 1942).
11. For these phenomena, see Stephen Fujita and David O'Brien, *The Japanese American Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 79.
12. Mary Nagatomi, interview by author, June 5, 2002.
13. BCA Archives, Box 1B (Letters—"Serve in Silence," March 5, 1942).
14. Young Buddhist Association of Butte Camp, ed., *Gathas and Services* (Rivers, Ariz.: YBA, 1944), 9-10.
15. Quoted in Susan Davis, "Mountain of Compassion: Dharma in American Internment Camps," *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* 2.4 (Summer 1993): 49.
16. Bunyû Fujimura, *Though I Be Crushed* (Los Angeles: Nembutsu, 1995), 95. An exception to this nonsectarian Buddhism occurred in Manzanar Camp, where the main Buddhist church was led by a Jôdo Shin priest while a separate Nichiren Buddhist church existed for believers in that sect.
17. On collecting wood in the desert to make Buddhist altars, see Akemi Kikumura, *Through Harsh Winters: The Life of a Japanese Immigrant Woman* (Novato, Calif.: Chandler and Sharp, 1981), 52-53. Davis has also noted that "in response to the lack of Buddhist articles in some camps, people carved Buddha statues and shrines from scrap wood

and sagebrush found in the desert. At the North Dakota camp, Arthur Yamabe, who later became a minister, once carved a figure of baby Buddha from a carrot" ("Mountain of Compassion," 49).

18. This necrology is held at Zenshūji Temple in Los Angeles.

19. On the Americanization program and religion, see Gary Okihiro, "Religion and Resistance in America's Concentration Camps," *Phylon* 45.3 (Third Quarter 1981): 220-33.

20. For a glimpse into the government's thinking on Americanization, see House of Representatives, Subcommittee of the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States* (78th Cong., 1st sess., 1943), 21. For the Buddhist basketball team, see "Basketball Title at Hand," *Sangha News* 1.2 (February 13, 1944): 1.

21. In July 1944, the BCA ratified at a Salt Lake City conference a new constitution that adopted English as its primary language. See Kenneth Tanaka, "BCA: The Lotus That Bloomed behind Barbed Wire," *Turning Wheel*, Spring 1993, 41.

22. See Stephen Prothero, "Henry Steel Olcott and 'Protestant Buddhism,'" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63.2 (Summer 1995): 281-302.

23. For YBA activities, see articles from the Rohwer camp's Buddhist newsletter: "YBA Girls Help Red Cross," *Sangha News* 1.2 (February 13, 1944): 1; "Bussei Hostesses Serve Local USO," *Sangha News* 1.4 (March 12, 1944): 1.

24. David Yoo, "Enlightened Identities: Buddhism and Japanese Americans of California, 1924-1941," *Western Historical Quarterly* 27.3 (Autumn 1996): 281. For more on the ethnic and religious identities of second-generation Japanese American Buddhists and Christians, see David Yoo, *Growing up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-49* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 38-67.

25. Kihara Jōin, *Arashi No Nakade: Kaisen To Spai Yōgi* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdo, 1985); translation by the author.

26. This section on postwar nisei work on the 1948 Golden Jubilee celebration, the B for Buddhism campaign, and the headstone marker campaign depends heavily on the research of Michael Masatsugu, "Reorienting the Pure Land: Buddhism, Beats, and Japanese Identities in Cold War America, 1945-67" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Irvine, 2002), chap. 2.

27. See "1948 Buddhist Golden Jubilee Celebration," *Life*, September 1948, 76-77.

28. Diana Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001).

29. See "Bias Incidents against Muslims are Soaring, Islamic Council Says," *New York Times*, May 1, 2002, A22.

30. The Fresno Buddhist Church, for example, was vandalized in this way. I owe this account to Nagatomi, interview.

31. For a transcript of the president's remarks, see <<http://www.adc.org/action2001/17september2001v002.htm>>.

32. On the context of Bush's mosque visit, see Dana Milbank and Emily Wax, "Bush Visits Mosque to Forestall Hate Crimes," *Washington Post*, September 18, 2001, A1.

33. House Bill HR 227 was introduced by Representatives David Bonier and Tom Davis; the Senate resolution, SJR 23, was introduced by Senators Orrin Hatch, Tom Harkin, Russ Feingold, and Patrick Leahy.

34. See "N.Y. Buddhist Rite Remembers 9-11 Dead," *Japan Times*, July 18, 2002, 2.

35. William Glaberson, "War on Terrorism Stirs Memory of Internment," *New York Times*, September 24, 2001, A18; Evelyn Nieves, "Recalling Internment and Saying 'Never Again,'" *New York Times*, September 28, 2001, A16.

36. Nieves, "Recalling Internment," A16.

37. Robert E. Pierre, "Fear Permeates Arab Enclave near Detroit, Muslim Americans Say Terror War Targets Them," *International Herald Tribune*, August 6, 2002, 4.