

Research Article

Journal of Global Buddhism 15 (2014): 35-61



Diversification in the Buddhist Churches of America: Demographic Trends and Their Implications for the Future Study of U.S. Buddhist Groups

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Research Article

Diversification in the Buddhist Churches of America: Demographic Trends and Their Implications for the Future Study of U.S. Buddhist Groups¹

Anne C. Spencer

Abstract

Scholars of U.S. Buddhism often divide Buddhist groups into categories using a system called “Two Buddhisms.” These groups are “Heritage,” founded by immigrants, and “Convert,” founded by Americans of European descent. As cultural pressures force U.S. Buddhist groups to adapt, the resulting changes challenge our existing categorization systems. This paper uses 2011 survey data to show that the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) is becoming demographically more diverse and its practices more Americanized. With these adaptations, the BCA no longer fits easily into either Heritage or Convert categories, suggesting that the Two Buddhisms system in its current form is inadequate for evaluating U.S. Buddhist groups. To aid the future study of U.S. Buddhism, I use the data from the BCA to provide an alternative, more nuanced, rubric for assessing the adaptation of Buddhist groups which will enhance the existing Two Buddhisms system.

Introduction

Categorization systems used to differentiate various U.S. Buddhist groups can further our understanding of trends in U.S. Buddhism but at the same time dividing different U.S. Buddhist groups into denominations/streams/containers/vehicles creates problems. At its best categorization improves our understanding of the religious landscape, describing its diversity and fostering understanding, and, at its worst, it creates misunderstandings and reinforces racist stereotypes (Padget, 2000; Hickey, 2010; Nattier, 1997; Wilson, 2009; Hori, 2010).

This paper uses results from a survey of Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) temples to evaluate one of the most common categorization systems used in the study of U.S. Buddhism, the system sometimes called “Two Buddhisms” in which Buddhist groups are categorized by their cultural, ethnic, and national background. Scholars such as Prebish (1993) and Numrich (1996) noticed that there is a tendency for Buddhism to fall into one of two broad categories: immigrants from Asia who brought Buddhism with them (and their descendants), and Americans typically of European ancestry who, as teens or adults, decided to pursue Buddhist practice. The first group has been called

¹ This work is based on my graduate research at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley, CA. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the conference: “The Pure Land in Buddhist Cultures: History, Image, Praxis, Thought” May 31-June 2, 2013 held at the University of British Columbia. I am grateful to my fellow panelists and participants for their helpful feedback.

Ethnic Buddhists, Baggage Buddhists, Cradle Buddhists, Culture or Heritage Buddhists, while the second group has been called White Buddhists, Convert Buddhists, New Buddhists, Elite Buddhists, Import Buddhists, or Convert Buddhists.² These categories, which are based on relatively obvious demographic features, have been easy to apply and often helpful in academic studies describing and comparing U.S. Buddhist groups.

One limitation to this system, however, is that it creates the false impression that the categories are static, that they do not change with time and social conditions (Hickey, 2010; Wilson, 2009) despite the fact that change in U.S. religious sects is typical and has been well documented. In *The Churching of America*, Finke and Stark (2011) describe how immigrant congregations, whether Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish, or more recently Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist, are “forced to compete in a religious market with no support from the state and where religious alternatives are many” (241). These market pressures along with other cultural pressures force the immigrants’ religious institutions to adapt in order to meet the needs of existing members and recruit new members; if groups do not adapt they will gradually die out (Finke, 2011). Given that adaptation is the norm for U.S. immigrant religions, it makes sense that Heritage Buddhist groups would change over time to better fit into U.S. culture and its religious marketplace.

As these adaptations occur they challenge the existing categorization systems, requiring scholars to review and update these systems. This paper uses survey data to show that the BCA does not fit into either Heritage or Convert categories, providing evidence that cultural adaptation is occurring in one Heritage group and suggesting that the Two Buddhism system in its current form is already becoming obsolete. In addition, this paper provides an alternative, more nuanced, rubric for assessing the adaptation of Buddhist groups to U.S. culture, a rubric which I believe will enhance the Two Buddhisms system.

Heritage and Convert Buddhism

Before describing my research, let me provide a summary of generalizations made by previous authors regarding the two categories of U.S. Buddhists so we can compare them to each other and to the BCA. Observations and formal research looking at U.S. Buddhist groups have provided multiple characterizations regarding both Heritage and Convert groups. These characteristics can be summarized by placing them on seven continua: 1) Asian vs. non-Asian Ethnicity, 2) Buddhist vs. non-Buddhist Religious Background, 3) Mixed vs. primarily Middle and Upper Socioeconomic Status³, 4) Social

² As will be discussed further in the conclusion, all the terms used for both these groups have problems. However, for simplicity, I have chosen to use “Heritage” and “Convert” to describe these two groups for the rest of the paper.

³ Continuum 3 is the most awkward of the seven continua to work with because Heritage groups, as traditionally characterized, do not consistently occupy one side of the socioeconomic continuum and may, in fact, land anywhere along it. For example, a Heritage group may serve refugees with lower incomes and education levels, or immigrants recruited based on their

vs. Individual Practice, 5) Diverse vs. Focused Practice, 6) Asian Language vs. English Language, 7) Mixed Cultural and Religious Activities vs. Exclusively Religious Activities.

Applying this system to both groups, we see the characteristics attributed to Heritage groups are that they have a/an:

1. mono-ethnically **Asian/Asian-American** membership (Chandler, 2005; Lin, 1999; Yang and Ebaugh, 2001),
2. membership that was born into **families that practiced Buddhism** (regardless of whether they were born in the U.S. or in Asia) (Gregory, 2001: 244),
3. **Mixed socio-economic status** and education level (variation both within and between groups based on reasons for migration) (Lin, 1999; Yang and Ebaugh, 2001; Cadge, 2005),
4. emphasis on the social and **communal religious practices** (for example festivals, feasts, funerals and memorial services (Yang & Ebaugh, 2001: 271)) rather than individual practices (Cadage, 2005: 195),
5. **diverse religious practice** which includes activities such as chanting, ceremonies for good health and good luck, devotional rituals, and formal opportunities to donate to the Sangha (Cadage, 2005),
6. religious activities, programs, and administrative meetings primarily in the **native (Asian) language of the immigrant community** (Cadage, 2005: 61) and,
7. inclusion of **non-religious programs** and services including cultural activities and social services to help immigrants adapt to American life (Finke and Stark, 2011: 241; Nattier, 1997; Yang and Ebaugh, 2001).

In contrast to the Heritage groups, characteristics attributed to Convert groups are that they have a/an:

1. mono-ethnically **Euro-American** membership (Cadage, 2005),
2. membership who became Buddhist or **adopted Buddhist practice as teens or adults**, often after being raised in Christian, Jewish, or non-religious households (Gregory, 2001: 244),

technical skills who have high incomes and education levels, or a combination of both, or another different demographic than either of these. The challenge caused by this variation, however, only occurs when lumping all Heritage groups together. When monitoring changes in individual groups over time or in comparing individual groups to one another, socioeconomic data is immensely valuable and therefore I use this category despite its limitations. When using this continuum for working with a single group, I suggest replacing the description “mixed” used in this paper with “low” to better allow for tracking a group’s movement (in either direction) over time.

3. socio-economic background in the **educated middle, upper-middle, and upper classes** (Coleman, 2002),
4. interest in **individual spiritual practices**, most often meditation, often seeing community activities as secondary or unnecessary (Cadge, 2005),
5. focus on **one or two religious practices** (e.g. meditation or chanting), rather than diverse practices (Coleman, 2002),
6. religious activities, programs, and administrative meetings primarily in **English language** (Cadge, 2005), and
7. **limited interest in non-religious programs** such as cultural activities, or social services (Cadge, 2005: 101).

Given the relatively recent arrival of Buddhism to America,⁴ it is reasonable to expect that both Heritage and Convert groups will change and adapt as their groups become more established. The needs of the first generation of Buddhists on U.S. soil (whether they are immigrants or converts) would be different from the needs and goals of subsequent generations. Transitional roles are important for the first generation(s) of immigrants, but as the immigrants and their descendants become increasingly acculturated to the dominant culture, their needs change. Heritage groups will modify their traditions and programs to accommodate the needs and desires of younger generations who speak English and are accustomed to U.S. culture and to recruit new members from outside of their ethnic community (Finke & Stark, 2011: 241).

Similarly, the organizations serving primarily Euro-Americans will also need to adapt. For example, as members who joined in early adulthood age, they may find that they look to Buddhist groups to serve more than just their spiritual needs (Cadge 2007: 203), and those groups may as a result begin offering more social activities and diverse spiritual practices, such as lifecycle rituals and programs for children. One of the pressures leading to these adaptations often comes from the desire to pass Buddhism on to members' children or members of other generations (Nattier, 1997).

My research looks at the demographics and practice of the subset of U.S. Jodo Shinshu Buddhists affiliated with the BCA. Jodo Shinshu (JSS) consists of several Heritage Buddhist groups that have been active in America since the turn of the 20th century and is the Heritage tradition with the longest continuous presence in the U.S. (Ama, 2011). However, it has not been as widely studied as its long history suggests (Mitchell, 2010). Hickey previously noted demographic shifts in U.S. JSS as well as the lack of research in this area: "After four or five generations in the United States, however, [JSS] is neither an immigrant community nor composed primarily of converts. Its members' income and education levels are probably similar to those classified as 'elite' but I do not have

⁴ The majority of Heritage Buddhist groups trace their American origins to the 1965 immigration act, while the majority of convert groups started as a result of social influences that began in the 1950s-1960s. There are exceptions; one exception, Jodo Shinshu, arrived with Japanese immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

that data” (Hickey, 2010: 12). By providing quantitative data on the demographics and attitudes of the BCA, my research is designed to answer this question of whether established, “mature” Heritage groups have a different demographic make-up and patterns of behavior than either post-1965 Heritage groups or the Convert groups.⁵

JSS is a Japanese Buddhist sect emphasizing lay practice that belongs to a larger category of Buddhism called “Pure Land” Buddhism. Due to a combination of the popularity of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan and specific immigration patterns, over half of Japanese immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were from a Pure Land school (Ama, 2011).

The primary modern institution serving Jodo Shinshu Buddhists in the U.S. is the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), an overseas district of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, (commonly known as Nishi Hongwanji), which is headquartered in Kyoto, Japan. The BCA currently includes over 60 temples with a total of approximately 16,000 members throughout the United States (Buddhist Churches of America, 2011).⁶ Typically these temples employ at least one ordained priest and are administered by a volunteer board of lay members. Organizationally, BCA temples are part of one of eight District Councils, five in California and the other three representing the Eastern, Mountain States, and Northwest regions (Buddhist Churches of America, 2011).⁷

Methods

Using the survey tools used by previous researchers, especially Coleman (2002) and Hammond (1999), as guides I designed a survey specifically for the BCA. I retained demographic questions from previous surveys and added questions relevant to BCA temple structure and activities—for example, questions about children’s programs, Japanese cultural programs, and social activities sponsored by the temples. Survey questions used for this paper can be found in Appendix 1.

An electronic version of the paper survey was created and uploaded onto Surveygizmo (www.surveygizmo.com) and became available on September 26, 2011. Using electronic distribution of the surveys the survey link was made available to any individuals who wanted to participate. Invitations to participate were distributed through various

⁵ The BCA is hardly the only Buddhist group representing pre-1965 Asian Heritage Buddhist groups. However, its size, length of tenure in the US, broad geographic distribution, and extensive organization and infrastructure (that could be used to distribute the surveys) made it an obvious first choice for this project.

⁶ The 16,000 membership estimate is the number officially reported by the BCA on its website in 2011. BCA membership rates are approximate for a variety of reasons. Temples have traditionally counted member *families* rather than individuals. BCA converts the family membership number to individual membership using a standard formula which is necessarily approximate. In addition, not all participants in BCA temples become official members and, in some cases, temples will underreport membership to the BCA (Mitchell, 2010).

⁷ Hawaii is its own overseas district (The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii) and is not included in the BCA.

temple email lists, temple websites, Facebook accounts, newsletters, and the October 2011 issue of the BCA's monthly newsletter, *The Wheel of Dharma*, which is sent to all BCA members. A paper version of the survey which matched the formatting of the electronic version was printed later that week and distributed to pre-selected temples and upon request. The electronic version of the survey was taken down on November 14, 2011 after having been accessible for approximately seven weeks.

A total of 498 responses were received. Of these 83 were eliminated because they were incomplete. Four were disqualified for not accepting the consent form and another four were disqualified because their primary temple was outside of the geographic region covered by the BCA. This left 407 valid surveys for data analysis. Responses were received from all eight districts and 43 of the 60 BCA temples (72%). Response rates were approximated using reported membership from each temple/region as the denominator. This method allows comparison of relative response rates between sub-groups, but is limited by the fact that the survey was open to people regardless of temple membership status and the various complexities by which temple membership is calculated, discussed above. Using this method, the highest response rate, 11.3%, was from the Northwest district. The lowest rate, < 1%, was from the Coastal California district. The non-California temples had a 7% response rate compared with a 1.5% response from the California temples. Overall, 52% of respondents were from non-California temples, compared to 48% from California temples. Over 75% of official BCA members are in California and so this indicates that my responses may be more reflective of trends outside of California, a point I will return to in the conclusion.

Because of the nature of the survey ascertainment method, which included voluntary response from advertisements in BCA and individual temple newsletters and because the response method was primarily electronic, my respondents pool was biased both toward the more active members and internet savvy members. As Mitchell (2010) describes, temple membership numbers as listed by the BCA do not always accurately reflect the actual levels of participation in a temple. Many families are on the membership roles and pay dues but rarely attend services or participate in other aspects of temple life, while other individuals and families may participate actively in the temple, but never become members. Because people who respond to surveys tend to be more engaged,⁸ it is likely that my respondents are drawn from the pool of active participants, regardless of membership status, rather than the group that are officially members but rarely participants. This pattern is supported by findings within the survey itself which showed that over 70% of respondents volunteer at their temples at least once a month, 90% of respondents expect their rate of volunteering to stay the

⁸ Active members of a community being more likely to respond to surveys is common phenomenon in survey research: "One significant area of potential non-response bias identified ... is that survey participants tend to be significantly more engaged in civic activity than those who do not participate, confirming what previous research has shown. People who volunteer are more likely to agree to take part in surveys than those who do not do these things" (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2012). This phenomenon has also been described in demographic research of Buddhist groups specifically Hammond's survey study of Soka Gakkai (Hammond, 1999, pp. 187-188).

same (60%) or increase (30%), and 82% said that they were unlikely to stop attending the temple in the next 5 years. As a result, my findings, while limited in their representation of the entire BCA membership, are likely predictive of future trends in the BCA since they reflect the responses of the active membership.

Results

To address the question of whether the BCA fits accepted characterizations of Heritage or Convert Buddhist groups or both or neither, I present only the relevant subset of my data following the seven continua system described earlier.

1. Ethnic Background

Respondents were allowed to mark multiple ethnic categories, allowing those of mixed ethnicity to mark all applicable categories. Due to small numbers in several categories, and to preserve confidentiality for these respondents, data was aggregated into four categories. Sixty-three percent of respondents were of mono-ethnic Japanese ancestry and 27% were of mono-ethnic Caucasian ancestry. Together these accounted for 90% of respondents. The next largest group (6.6%) includes all those with other Asian ancestry, including non-Japanese Asians and anyone with mixed Asia/non-Asian ancestry.⁹ Finally, the smallest group (3.3%) consists of those without any Asian ancestry who would not mark “Caucasian” (these include individual of Black, Native American, and Latino ethnicity). Because these “Other Asian” and “Other non-Asian” groups are small, they were incorporated into the first two categories for data analysis creating two groups—“Some Asian Ancestry” (69.6%) or “No Asian Ancestry” (30.3%).

These data suggest that the BCA, with more than 30% of respondents with no Asian ancestry, is more ethnically diverse than Post-1965 Heritage groups in which the vast majority of participants are ethnically Asian.¹⁰ This represents a significant change in BCA demographics since Kashima surveyed the BCA forty years ago and found it to be “predominantly by and for Japanese and Japanese Americans” (Kashima, 1977: 132). On the other hand, with only 30% non-Asian membership, the BCA retains a significant Asian majority and therefore is more ethnically Asian than most Convert Buddhist groups. It appears that the BCA falls somewhere between these two extremes, having a significant percentage of non-Asian participants while retaining a definite majority of Japanese Americans, a majority which is even more dramatic given that Japanese Americans constitute only about 0.4% of the American population (Shinagawa, et al.,

⁹ This group also includes those individuals of mixed Japanese and Caucasian ancestry, who account for only 1.2% of the total number of respondents.

¹⁰ See, for example Yang & Ebaugh (2001: 270–271) for a description of a Houston Taiwanese temple with a membership of 740 families, with less than 30 attendees of non-Asian descent, Lin (1999: 151–2) who describes the few members of European descent at Fo Guang Shan’s Hsi Lai Temple in California as a “novelty” in an otherwise primarily Chinese-American community, and Cadge, (2005) who observes that the non-Asian participants of the Thai Temple she studied in Pennsylvania were almost exclusively limited to the husbands of Thai and Thai American women (Cadge, 2005, p. 61).

2009: 5).

The percentage of individuals with No Asian Ancestry deserves some further explanation, since to some who are familiar with the BCA it may seem like an overestimate, and indeed it may be, depending on how the numbers are considered. As discussed above, survey respondents were more likely to reflect active participants in temple activities. The ancestry rates found here may not accurately reflect the ancestry rates of those on the membership roles, but rather those participating actively in the temple regardless of membership status. Given the history of the BCA as a primarily Japanese immigrant organization I would expect the membership roles to reflect higher rates of Japanese ancestry, whereas it appears that the current survey was sensitive to detecting current and future trends in BCA participation. Supporting this claim is the fact that while people with Some Asian Ancestry outnumbered those with No Asian Ancestry in all age groups 50 and above, the numbers of respondents in each ethnic category were equal in the 40–49 age group, and those with No Asian Ancestry actually outnumbered those with Asian ancestry in the 30–39 age group, implying that the BCA is becoming more ethnically diverse among the younger generations. Second, ethnicity distribution varied considerably between temples and the survey results reflect the average of many individual temples with different ethnic make-up. Among individual temples, there were some showing over 90% Asian Ancestry respondents and at least one temple with 90% of respondents reporting No Asian Ancestry.

2. Religious Background

Over half (57%) of respondents were born into JSS households, although not all of those families were actively practicing JSS while their children were growing up. Another 3.9% were born into families who identified with another Buddhist tradition, such as Shingon or Zen. Overall, just 61% of the respondents, regardless of ethnic background, were raised in Buddhist households. The rest of the respondents were raised either in non-Buddhist religious households or households that identified with no religion at all. There was no evidence that those raised in non-Buddhist households were disproportionately likely to come from certain religious backgrounds when compared to the general population.¹¹

With 39% of members having been born into non-Buddhist homes and 61% having been born into Buddhist homes, BCA respondents don't fit well into either the Heritage or Convert categories, but lie somewhere in between.

To understand this pattern better, and knowing that almost a third of respondents have

¹¹ This comparison used the Pew study on the religious distribution in America (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2007). There are limitations with this survey, especially the fact that since the survey was only conducted in English and Spanish, newer immigrants who did not speak these languages were not included. This probably results in the under-ascertainment among Asian immigrants. Nonetheless, given that over three-quarters of the BCA respondents raised in non-Buddhist homes were of non-Asian descent, the 2007 Pew study remains the most useful comparison group. The newer 2012 study, *Asian Americans: A Mosaic of Faiths*, which addresses the shortcomings of the previous study, only surveyed Asian Americans.

no Asian background, I looked to see if religious heritage correlated with ethnic background. Not surprisingly, I found a significant difference ($p < .05$) between the Asian ancestry group and the non-Asian group in terms of religion in the family of origin, with Asians being significantly more likely to have been born into Buddhist families than non-Asians. However, not all Asians were born into Buddhist families. In fact, 12.4% of Asian-ancestry respondents were raised in non-Buddhist families. Of these, 7.1% were raised in families that practiced non-Buddhist religions and 5.3% were raised in families that practiced no religion. So, while it does appear that the majority of adult Asian-American Buddhists surveyed were raised in Buddhist families, it is also not unusual for an Asian-American Buddhist to have been raised in another tradition. The data clearly show that people of Asian descent can also be Buddhist “converts.” Here we see clearly a sign that, as Wilson (2009: 840) suggested, our terminology is already breaking down.

On the other hand, I also found that less than 1% of respondents with no Asian ancestry were raised in Buddhist families, indicating that the vast majority of Buddhists of non-Asian ancestry participating in the BCA are also “converts.”

3. Socioeconomic Measures

The majority of respondents to this survey are highly educated, work in professional occupations and have higher than average incomes, something typically associated with Convert groups. Over 35% of respondents hold a graduate degree and over 38% have a Bachelor’s degree as their highest degree. Together this means that 73% have a Bachelor’s degree or higher. By comparison, the equivalent percentages of people holding at least a Bachelor’s degree for the general population, and for Japanese Americans, are 27% (United States Census Bureau, 2012) and 46% (Shinagawa, et al., 2009: 13) respectively. At least part of the higher rate of education among Jodo Shinshu members can be accounted for by the age range of respondents; the people who have completed the survey are older and have had more time to complete their education.

The respondents were most likely to be employed in Professional and Managerial occupations (62.2%); this fits with the observation that Japanese Americans seem to be disproportionately likely to be involved in these occupations compared to other Americans (Shinagawa, et al., 2009: 22–25). Other common occupational categories for Jodo Shinshu members are Clerical (20.9%) and Service (6.7%).

The high levels of education and employment are reflected in the incomes of the people who completed the survey. At a time when the median income in the U.S. is \$49,445, over 60% of the 325 who responded to this question (20% declined to answer) reported making over \$60,000 a year.

Overall, I find the results of the survey suggest that currently the BCA draws the majority of its participants from the educated middle and upper-middle class, with levels of education, income and percentages of professionals all being well above the national average. Historically most of the JSS participants around the turn of the 20th century were Japanese immigrant farm workers or laborers who also faced considerable economic setbacks mid-20th century due to internment during WWII (Buddhist

Churches of America, 1974). Comparison to the current data shows clearly that the socioeconomic status of BCA participants has increased dramatically over the past century bringing it more in line with what is seen in Convert groups as described by Coleman (2002) and Hammond (1999).

Since this trend toward participants coming from the middle and upper-middle classes is associated with Convert Buddhists, I was curious to see if socioeconomic status varies among respondents depending on their ethnic backgrounds. Using Chi-squared analysis, I found no statistical difference at the $p < .05$ level between those respondents of Asian background and those with no Asian background in educational background, occupation, and income, suggesting that participants had similar socio-economic status regardless of ethnic background.

Practice

Both the 4th and 5th continua describe how Buddhist groups approach practice. Continuum 4 asks whether groups perceive the center of practice to be the individual or the community, with Convert groups emphasizing individual practices over community practice. Often the individual practice of choice in Convert groups is meditation (Coleman, 2002) (Cadge, 2005). People from Convert groups who meditate often meditate individually at home, but will also come together regularly or occasionally to meditate as a group. Although group meditation has a different character than individual meditation, it does not require as much overt interaction as many of the communal activities seen in Heritage temples. Heritage Buddhist groups tend to emphasize public and private religious services such as funerals, memorial services, and festivals. Heritage groups, especially the lay members, are less likely to meditate, since meditation is seen as the responsibility of the monastic community (Cadge, 2005).

Continuum 5 looks at diversity of practice, how many different practices a Buddhist in each group might engage in. For Convert Buddhists, there is usually a focus on a single practice, which is most often meditation (although chanting is the primary practice in Soka Gakkai (Hammond, 1999)), while Heritage members are much more diverse in their activities and may not meditate at all.

BCA documents demonstrate that throughout its history, the BCA has engaged in varied and communal practices consistent with its history as a Heritage temple.¹²

¹² To learn more about practice in the BCA in its early history, please see (Ama, 2011) and the BCA's *Buddhist Churches of America: 75 Year History 1899–1974* which provides detailed descriptions of the history and activity of each BCA temple, and the more recent, but less thorough, *Buddhist Churches of America: A Legacy of the First 100 Years* which provides a current list of all affiliated organizations (for example, Japanese language school, Japanese arts groups, Scouting, choir, etc.) Assertions made in this paper regarding BCA practices are based on these documents and supported by my informal interviews with Nisei members at several Northwest and California temples.

4. Individual Practice vs. Communal Practice

BCA practitioners engage in both individual and communal practices. However, JSS often officially deemphasizes or even discourages meditation as a practice, claiming it to be self-power; instead, Nishi Hongwanji encourages daily practice at one's home altar by offering incense, reciting the Nembutsu, and/or chanting (Buddhist Churches of America, 1974: 29; Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, Hongwanji International Center, 2004: 102). Despite this, the current survey finds that 34% of respondents claim to meditate by themselves at least once a week, and 13.5% participate in a meditation group at least once a week. By comparison, a 2007 survey found that 9.4% of Americans in the general population had meditated in the past twelve months (National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, 2010). So we see that respondents meditate at a higher rate than the general population, but at a lower rate than has been reported among Convert groups (Coleman, 2002).

About 10% of Jodo Shinshu respondents in the current survey chant sutras at home (not as part of a temple service) at least once a week,¹³ indicating that more of the participants surveyed meditate than chant. It appears that meditation is becoming an accepted practice in the BCA, but remains significantly less common in the BCA than what is reported in many Convert communities.

Besides meditation and chanting, other individual practices reported by respondents are saying the Nembutsu to oneself (62%) saying the Nembutsu out loud (51%), and tending to a home altar (25%). Saying the Nembutsu, the most popular individual practice, can be done while engaging in daily activities and does not require dedicated practice time, suggesting that BCA practitioners may prefer practices which are easily performed while going about their non-religious activities.

Although a significant number of respondents report engaging in dedicated individual practices, the majority do not. The survey demonstrates that respondents are more active in communal activities than individual ones. About 85% attend service at least once a month and 91% said that they attended a Sunday service in the last six months. Over 70% volunteer at the temple at least once a month, 89% have helped with fund-raisers or cultural activities within the last 6 months, and 87% have participated in a social activity at the temple in the last six months. Comparing the participation rates, we can see that more respondents engage in these communal activities than in any one of the individual activities such as meditating, chanting, or even saying the Nembutsu.

We see here that a significant number of BCA respondents engage in individual practices, including a third who meditate regularly. However, the emphasis seems to remain on communal practices, placing the BCA somewhere on the middle of the continuum between individual and communal, but leaning toward the communal.

¹³ Jodo Shinshu Buddhists do not consider reciting the Nembutsu as either a chanting or a meditative practice.

5. Diversity of Practice

From the previous section, we can see already that survey respondents engage in a variety of individual practices at moderate levels but that they are more likely to attend services than to engage in individual practices. To get more information about what aspects of temple practice they found most meaningful, I asked participants to rate the importance of ten specific aspects of a typical Sunday service. Of these elements, seven were ranked as important by over 80% of respondents. The most important was Dharma talks for adults, which over 95% considered important, and this element was closely followed by six other elements: saying the Nembutsu together, sutra chanting, Dharma talks for children, announcements about temple events, and the tolling of the *kansho* bell to mark the beginning of the service. My interpretation of the positive response to all of these elements is that the participants of this survey find the service itself to be meaningful, and that each one of the elements is important individually, as well as in being part of the whole, communally experienced service.

The data provided in this and the previous section support the view that BCA Buddhists engage in varied practices, with no single practice standing out as primary, something that has traditionally been associated with the practice of Heritage temples.

Numrich (1996) described the phenomenon of parallel congregations in which people of different ethnicity participate in different activities out of the same facility. My study showed no statistically significant difference ($p < 0.5$) between the ethnic groups in their importance ratings of the various service elements, frequency of Sunday service attendance, or participation in social events. Although individuals with Asian ancestry were more likely to have attended a funeral and less likely to have attended a class than those without Asian ancestry, both groups attended all activities in significant numbers. Overall, the data do not support a major ethnic divide within the BCA communities who completed the survey.

Linguistic and Cultural Adaptations

Both the 6th and 7th continua address issues of linguistic and cultural adaptations. Heritage Buddhist groups often function, in part, as cultural centers, offering activities to help immigrants stay connected with their home cultures and language as well as helping them adapt to their new world (Finke, 2011: 139–140, 241). In contrast, Convert groups tend to stay focused on religious activities (Coleman, 2002). Over the past century, the BCA has made multiple cultural and linguistic adaptations as both immigrants and their American-born descendants acculturate to the dominant American culture (Ama, 2011, p. 87–107). This section will try to assess the BCA's relationship to its linguistic and cultural roots in Japan.

6. Language

At the developmental stage when the BCA consisted mainly of immigrants, its primary language was Japanese (Ama, 2011). In 1972 the majority of BCA temples preferred Japanese-speaking ministers and only placed non-Japanese speaking ministers in larger temples that had multiple ministers and a sizable English-speaking congregation (Kashima, 1977: 103). It also made sense for the group to retain many of the cultural

customs of its home country within the service. Over time, however, as more of its members have come from the American-born population (regardless of ethnicity), there has been increased pressure to incorporate aspects of the dominant culture into the life of the temple.¹⁴

Today the BCA offers most of its programming in English but also retains a fair amount of Japanese language.¹⁵ Each temple makes its own decisions about the balance of English and Japanese in their services. In most cases the Dharma talk of the primary service is in English; however, some temples have both English and Japanese Dharma talks while others offer separate all-Japanese services. Sutra chanting is typically done in an archaic form of clerical Japanese and the songs may be in English, Japanese, or a mix. Even an English language talk may include common Japanese words and phrases. The survey asked if this language mix, which is more English than found in Heritage temples and more Japanese than in Convert temples, was acceptable to the respondents; to this question, 88% said the balance was “just about right,” indicating a general satisfaction with the balance. The survey also showed a commitment to sutra chanting during Sunday services, with over 90% of respondents rating this service element important, suggesting that the foreignness of the sutras’ language did not seem to pose an obstacle to the majority of respondents.

7. Cultural and Non-Religious Activities

BCA temples typically offer cultural programs in addition to their religious activities. Some of these programs include Japanese activities such as Japanese dance, flower arranging, and language lessons (Buddhist Churches of America, 1974; Buddhist Churches of America, 1998; Ama, 2011). But they also offer non-Japanese programs such as Scouting, ukulele lessons, sports such as baseball and basketball leagues (Buddhist Churches of America, 1974), and community service programs like helping with a local food bank. The popularity of these programs suggested, by mid-20th century, the possibility that BCA temples had become social centers that had lost their focus on Buddhist teachings and practice, something that the BCA has received criticism for from “convert” Buddhists (Masatsugu, 2008) and which the BCA has specifically been concerned about (Tanaka, 1999). To address this concern, I looked at three statements regarding participants’ motivation for attending the temple. Fifty-one percent of respondents agreed with the statement, “I go to the temple because it is important to keep the Japanese cultural traditions alive.” However, even more (87.4%) respondents agreed with the statement “I go to the temple because it is important to keep the Buddhist teachings alive.” Finally, a total of 94.3% agreed to the statement, “I go to the

¹⁴ Finding a balance between maintaining traditions and adapting to American culture is difficult, and Heritage groups who have made significant changes may be accused of being “inauthentic” (Payne, 2005) or “too Christian.” On the other hand, the Heritage groups who do not make changes quickly can be seen as conservative and not open to outsiders. See Payne (2005), Campbell (2010), and Tanabe (2005) for discussion of how both accommodationist and conservationist approaches have created obstacles to maintenance and growth of membership.

¹⁵ Observations regarding language and ritual in BCA temples are based on my field interviews over the past five years as well temple websites and bulletins for several sites I was unable to visit personally.

temple because the Buddhist teachings are relevant to my life.” This suggests that while temples serve cultural purposes and preserve the Japanese culture of the immigrant communities, the respondents see these activities as secondary to, or integrated with, the primary mission of the temples, which is providing people with teachings that are spiritually and practically meaningful.

BCA temples have provided, throughout their history, a mix of social and religious programming as well as activities, such as taiko drumming and flower arranging, which can be taught as both secular and religious. This mix is consistent with the BCA’s history as a Heritage temple; however, it is important to acknowledge that most participants perceive the religious nature of the temple to be especially valuable.

Conclusion

These data provide an interesting glimpse into the demographics, practices, and attitudes of participants in BCA temples more than a century after JSS’s arrival in America. From the responses on the survey, it appears that the BCA is well into a process of integrating into the dominant American culture. Most respondents are American-born and English speaking and most temple activities are primarily in English. Although the group remains primarily ethnically Asian, especially Japanese, members and participants demonstrate increasing ethnic diversity. The religious background of participants is mixed, with “converts” coming from both Asian and non-Asian families. As a group, there is a strong tendency for high educational attainment and a higher than average socioeconomic status. The survey results, which show that participants are similar in socioeconomic status and involvement in temple activities regardless of ethnic background, do not provide evidence for parallel congregations based on ethnicity in the BCA.

BCA temples seem to provide support for their members to engage in a variety of practices, both individual and communal. There does not seem to be a single individual practice, such as chanting or meditating, that more than 70% of respondents were likely to engage in at least once a week. Instead, different people seem to engage in different sorts, or different combinations, of practices, everything from tending their home altar, to saying the Nembutsu, to meditating, as it suits them. The center of BCA life seems to be the temple, with most respondents saying that they regularly go to the temple for services, funerals, cultural and social activities, as well as volunteering in various capacities.

Participants in the survey seem quite satisfied with their participation in the temples and the choices that their temples have made in deciding which Japanese elements of the temple to keep and which to adjust to American culture. In addition, participants seem to enjoy the various cultural aspects of temple life but see them as less important than the religious functions.

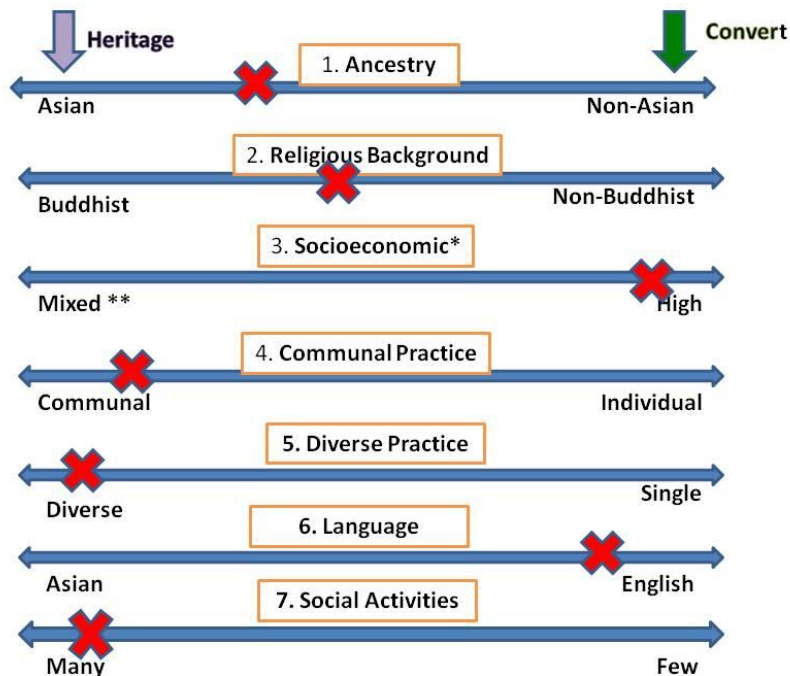
Going back to our original seven continua, we can now compare the findings of this survey of the BCA to characterizations of Heritage and Convert groups. These findings

are also shown in Figure 1.

1. Asian vs. non-Asian Ethnicity: Mixed ethnicity-- 70% Asian; 30% non-Asian
2. Buddhist vs. non-Buddhist Religious Background: Mixed religious background--61% Buddhist; 39% non-Buddhist
3. Mixed vs. Primarily Middle and Upper Socioeconomic Status: Middle and Upper Socioeconomic Status
4. Communal vs. Individual Practice: Mixed practice with Communal practice being more popular
5. Diverse vs. Focused Practice: Diverse Practice
6. Immigrant Language vs. English Language: Primarily English but with significant Japanese
7. Mixed Cultural and Religious Activities vs. Exclusive Religious Activities: Mixed cultural and religious activities but with priority on Religious Activity.

Figure 1. BCA results compared with previous characterizations of Heritage and Convert Buddhist groups

✗ = BCA results from current survey.



* See footnote 3 in main text for explanation of Continuum 3.

** "Mixed" can be replaced with "Low" depending on how this continuum is being used. See footnote 3 in main text for further explanation.

Using this rubric, we can see that the BCA has moved considerably away from its roots as a Heritage temple, especially when considering demographic features. The BCA attracts participants who have no Asian ancestry and participants (of both Asian and non-Asian ancestry) who were raised in non-Buddhist families. The socioeconomic data are more consistent with descriptions of Convert groups; this pattern is statistically the same regardless of ethnic background. And the BCA has moved away from using Japanese as its primary language and now most services, programs, and administrative meetings are carried out in English.

When looking at practice, however, we still see that there is an emphasis on those things which are typically associated with Heritage temples--communal practice, diverse practice, and inclusion of social activities. It is worth considering that this more communal and varied approach to practice found in the BCA may appeal to a considerable number of Americans, regardless of ethnic background, but was previously unavailable to non-Japanese Americans due to language and cultural barriers. Based on this trend, I propose that more non-Asian Americans may join post-1965 Buddhist groups as they begin to provide more programming in English.

One important implication of these findings is that researchers should be increasingly wary of making generalizations based on a group's demography, as these features appear to be the most fluid. The fact that most dramatic changes seen in the BCA are its demographic characteristics, not its religious practices, should cause us to seriously question the usefulness of the current iteration of the Two Buddhisms. We can see this demographic emphasis in looking at the terms currently used to describe both groups which label the group based on ethnicity and/or cultural heritage, ("Ethnic," "White," "Baggage," "Cradle," "Culture," "Heritage,"), socioeconomic status ("Elite"), or convert status ("New," "Import," and "Convert"), rather than practice or other, perhaps yet unstudied, features. While I am not arguing that these demographic features should be ignored, I am suggesting that making these the primary focus of the categorization system will become increasingly unhelpful, as both *historically* Heritage and *historically* Convert groups mature and diversify. Focusing primarily on demographic features will likely obscure other, more salient features, of U.S. Buddhist groups.

Another interesting finding is that individual meditation is becoming popular with BCA participants, and this is likely due to the influence of Convert Buddhism and popular Western assumptions about Buddhism being synonymous with meditation.

Taken together, the results of the research suggests a dynamic process in the BCA which results in the group having features of both Heritage and Convert Buddhist groups. As groups founded by immigrant communities and those founded by converts mature, influence each other, attract new members, and adapt to changing social conditions and religious market pressures, we should anticipate seeing similar changes in other groups.

Future research should, therefore, be directed toward documenting demographic and practice shifts which are already occurring in groups founded by both immigrants and converts. I offer my system of the seven continua scale as a tool that may be helpful in

this endeavor as it provides a more nuanced approach than previous systems have. Using multiple continua provides a quantitative way to compare a single group with itself over time and multiple groups with each other. I see the seven continua approach offered here not as a final product but as a starting point and expect that new continua can be added and existing ones modified as research progresses.

There are some limitations to this survey which point us toward areas of further research. Given that the data disproportionately came from districts outside of California, we may wonder how reflective these findings are of California BCA communities. California is the state with the highest percentage of Japanese-Americans on the U.S. mainland (Shinagawa, et al., 2009: 7) and therefore provides a different environment, with perhaps less cultural pressure to adapt, than states with a lower Japanese-American population. Wilson (2009: 845) suggests that BCA groups in areas with high Japanese American populations may be more conservative, while those outside of such areas may be more likely to become more diverse both ethnically and in practice. And while I do not have sufficient data to fully address Wilson's suggestion that there are significant differences between Californian and non-California temples, my data does confirm significant variation in ethnic make-up of individual temples throughout the BCA. Further research into the geographic patterns or other reasons behind these variations could be quite fruitful.

Finally, we may question how transferable these findings in a single U.S. Buddhist group are to other U.S. Buddhist groups. Without further research and time to see how groups evolve, we cannot know for sure. This study looked at the oldest organized continuous historically Heritage organization in the mainland U.S. And because of various ascertainment biases, its data probably best represent somewhat younger, more active BCA participants, who live outside the communities with the highest Japanese immigrant and Japanese-American population. These biases could make the findings an anomaly, an interesting side note that does not really help us understand much about other U.S. Buddhist groups. On the other hand, I would argue that it is precisely the fact that this data comes from a mature Buddhist organization and specifically from subgroups of the organization that are younger and are therefore under the greatest pressure to adapt that makes the data useful for considering what future will hold for other Heritage Buddhist groups facing similar cultural and economic pressures as they too adapt to life on U.S. soil.

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Appendix 1

Sample Questions excerpted from Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in America Survey¹⁶

Thank you for your interest in this survey. We have designed this survey to get information about participants in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in America. This information will be used to help understand American Buddhism in general, and may also be used to help Buddhist temples plan for the future. We are interested in getting information from people over age 18 who participate in any aspect of the temple life. We would like to hear from old and new members, people who only come to the temple occasionally and people who come regularly. If you are part of the temple in any way, we would like to hear about you and your experience. We do not ask for any identifying information (such as name, telephone, email, or address) so any information you provide will be anonymous and cannot be traced back to you.

Part A. *In this first set of questions, we would like to learn about your involvement with your temple.*

1) Which temple do you currently attend most? _____

2) Are you a member of a Jodo Shinshu temple?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Don't know

3) Which of the following have you done at/for your temple in the past 6 months?

	Yes	No
a. Donated money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Attended Sunday services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Attended a funeral or memorial service for a friend or relative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Taken a class or attended a workshop on a Buddhist topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Attended social activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Helped with temple maintenance and activities (cleaning, repairs, landscaping, preparing food, office help, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Helped with cultural activities and fundraisers (Obon festival, Bazaar,)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Participated in temple-sponsored community service (food bank,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹⁶ This document includes only the survey questions relevant to the current paper. Question numbers and formatting have been modified from the original. To request a copy of the complete survey, contact the author at aspencer@collegeofidaho.edu

community clean up, etc)

i. Other _____

☐☐

4) On average, how often have you visited your temple for services or other activities in the last 6 months?

☐

Less than once a month

☐

1 - 3 times a month

☐

Once a week

☐

More than once a week

5) Approximately how often have you volunteered for your temple in any capacity in the last 6 months (fund raisers, office work, cleaning, teaching classes, participating on a board or committee, helping with services, etc)?

☐

Less than once a month

☐

Once or twice a month

☐

3 or 4 times a month

☐

More than once a week.

6) Compared to what you volunteer now, how much time do you expect to volunteer for your local temple/or Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) over the next 5 years?

☐

More Time

☐

Less Time

☐

About the same

7) How likely is it that you will stop attending your temple in the next 5 years *for reasons other than health*?

☐

I will never stop attending temple

☐

It is unlikely that I will stop attending temple

☐

I am unsure

☐

I will probably stop attending temple

8) Please describe your relationship with the temple over the years by agreeing or disagreeing with the following statements.

Strongly

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly

Agree

Disagree

a. The temple has been important to

☐☐☐☐☐

me all or most of my life

b. There have been times when the temple is more important to me than other times. At some points I go to temple a lot, but other times I hardly ever go.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

c. I go to temple primarily because it is expected of me.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

d. I believe that it is important to raise children in the temple.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

e. I go to the temple because it is important to keep the Japanese cultural traditions alive.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

f. I go to the temple because it is important to keep the Buddhist teachings alive.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

g. I go to the temple because the Buddhist teachings are relevant to my life.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Part B. To better understand the Jodo Shinshu community in America, we need to collect some demographic data. Remember that this survey is anonymous, so this information cannot be tracked back to you.

9) What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female

10) How old are you?

☐ 80 or older

☐ 70–79

☐ 60–69

☐ 50–59

☐ 40–49

☐ 30–39

☐ 18–29

11) Please indicate your current occupational status.

- ☐ Employed full time
- ☐ Employed part time
- ☐ Housewife/househusband
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Retired/Pensioned

12) What is/was your primary career or occupation? If you are retired, please mark your primary occupation when you were working. Please mark only one answer.

- ☐ Not Applicable/Never employed
- ☐ Architecture and Engineering
- ☐ Art, Design, Entertainment
- ☐ Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance
- ☐ Business and Financial
- ☐ Clergy or Religious Service
- ☐ Community and Social Service
- ☐ Computer and mathematical
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Education/teacher
- ☐ Factory work
- ☐ Farming
- ☐ Fishing
- ☐ Food preparation and serving
- ☐ Forestry
- ☐ Healthcare Practitioner and Technical
- ☐ Healthcare support
- ☐ Housewife/Househusband
- ☐ Legal
- ☐ Maintenance and Repair

- ☐ Management
- ☐ Media
- ☐ Office and Administrative support
- ☐ Personal Care and Service
- ☐ Sales
- ☐ Scientist
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Other _____

13) Are you a student?

- ☐ Yes, full time
- ☐ Yes, part time
- ☐ No

14) What is your ancestry/ethnic background (mark all that apply)?

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black/African
- ☐ Asian—Japanese
- ☐ Asian—non-Japanese
- ☐ Native American/First Nations
- ☐ Pacific Islander
- ☐ Latino/Hispanic
- ☐ Other. Please describe _____

15) What is your approximate household income?

- ☐ Less than \$10,000
- ☐ \$10,000–30,000
- ☐ \$30,000–60,000
- ☐ \$60,000–90,000
- ☐ \$90,000–120,000
- ☐ Above \$120,000

☐ Prefer to not answer

16) How many people live in your household? _____

17) What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

☐ Elementary or Junior High school (grade kindergarten-8)

☐ Some High School (grade 9–11)

☐ High school graduate

☐ Some college, but not graduated

☐ Associate's (2 year college) degree

☐ Bachelor's (4 year college) degree

☐ Graduate or Professional degree

***Part C.** For this section, we would like to learn more about how you became involved with a Jodo Shinshu temple, and your experience with religions other than Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Because there are so many different ways that people come to Jodo Shinshu, it is possible that not all questions will apply to everyone. Please answer the questions as best you can.*

18) How would you describe the primary religious background of the family in which you were raised? Please choose the best answer.

☐ Jodo Shinshu Buddhist

☐ Other Buddhist (please specify) _____

☐ Catholic

☐ Protestant (please specify denomination) _____

☐ Jewish

☐ Muslim

☐ Other (please specify) _____

☐ None

Part D. Often Jodo Shinshu Buddhists are asked about their Buddhist practice. The following questions are designed to help us get a sense of what sorts of practices you do and do not engage in.

- 19) How often do you engage in these activities outside of the temple? Do not include activities done during formal temple services.

	At least once a week	Less than once a week	Rarely or Never
a. Tending to my home Butsudan (Buddhist altar)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Saying the nembutsu out loud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Saying the nembutsu to myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Meditating by myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Meditating with a group (OK to include meditation groups at your temple)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Engaging in acts of compassion or expressing gratitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Chanting (not including chanting during temple services)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 20) A typical American Buddhist service has many portions. Please rate how important each aspect of service is to you personally.

	Very important	Important	Not Very Important	Not Important At All	Don't know (not part of my temple's service)
a. Tolling of the Kansho (bell) to mark the beginning of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Meditation periods at the beginning or end of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Sutra Chanting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Listening to Dharma talks and Buddhist teachings for adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

e.	Listening to Dharma messages for children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.	Saying the Nembutsu together	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g.	Doing group readings (such as The 3 Treasures, Jodo Shinshu Creed, or Ryogemon)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h.	Singing gathas (songs accompanied by piano or organ) in <u>English</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i.	Singing gathas (songs accompanied by piano or organ) in <u>Japanese</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j.	Announcements about temple events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k.	Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21) What is your feeling about how much of a typical service is in Japanese versus how much is in English?

☐ There is too much Japanese
 ☐ It is just about right
 ☐ There is too much English