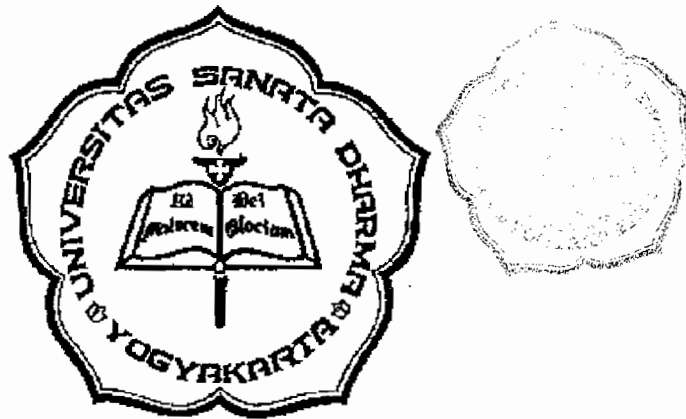


**THE PRACTICE OF MATERIALISM IN THE TRUE PURE LAND SECT
OF JAPANESE BUDDHISM CONVEYED IN THE MAJOR AND MINOR
CHARACTERS IN NIWA'S *THE BUDDHA TREE***

A Sarjana Sastra Thesis

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra*
in English Letters**



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**ENGLISH LETTERS STUDY PROGRAMME
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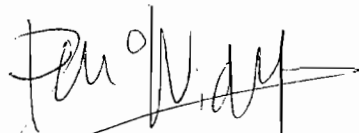
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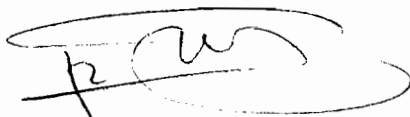
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**was defended in the front of the board of examiners
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and declared acceptable**

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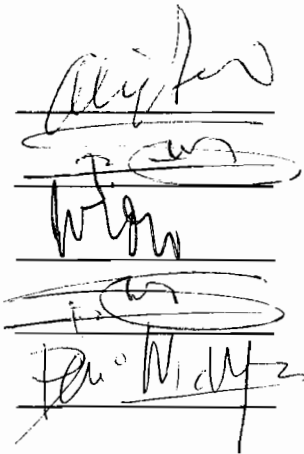
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE OF TITLE	i
PAGE OF APPROVAL	ii
PAGE OF ACCEPTANCE	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
ABSTRACT	viii
ABSTRAK	ix
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of the Study.....	1
B. Problems Formulation.....	3
C. Objectives of the Study.....	3
D. Benefits of the Study.....	3
E. Definition of Terms.....	4
CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL REVIEW	6
A. Review of Related Studies.....	6
B. Review of Related Theories.....	8
1. Review of Theories on Materialism.....	8
1.1 Materialism in Greek Philosophy.....	9
1.2 Materialism in Later Classical and Medieval Periods.....	9
1.3 Materialism in Marxist Theory.....	10
2. Review of Theories on Religion.....	12
3. Review of Theories on Character.....	18
C. Theoretical Framework.....	21
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	22
A. Object of the Study.....	22
B. The Approach.....	22
C. Method of the Study.....	23
CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS	25
A. The Description of the True Pure Land sect.....	25
A.1. The Major Characters.....	25
A.1.1. Soshu Getsudo.....	25
A.1.2. Mineyo Getsudo.....	26
A.1.3. Mosuke Yamaji.....	27
A.2. The Minor Characters.....	28
A.3. The True Pure Land Sect.....	29
B. How The Characters Reveal Materialism in the True Pure Land Sect.....	38
B.1. The Contribution of the Major Characters.....	38
B.1.1. The Contribution of Mosuke Yamaji.....	38

B.1.2. The Contribution of Mineyo Getsudo	45
B.1.3. The Contribution of Soshu Getsudo	46
B.2. The Contribution of the Minor Characters	47
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY	55
APPENDICES	57
Appendix I : Summary of <i>The Buddha Tree</i>	57
II : Biography of Fumio Niwa	59

ABSTRACT

Sasanti Nordewati. 2003. **The Practice of Materialism in the True Pure Land Sect of Japanese Buddhism Conveyed in the Major and Minor Characters in Niwa's *The Buddha Tree***. Yogyakarta: Department of English Letters. Faculty of Letters. Sanata Dharma University.

Fumio Niwa's *The Buddha Tree* is a story of a Buddhist priest, Soshu Getsudo, of the Butsuoji temple of the True Pure Land sect who is trapped in delicate problems. As a priest, Soshu is morally incompetent due to his affair with his own mother-in-law. It makes him realize that his life as a Buddhist priest is empty after all. Trapped in worldly pleasure, Soshu is faced with the fact that the establishment of his temple is endangered by the emerge of some new popular sects in Tan'ami, and the parishioners' negligence toward their spiritual life over money.

In the analysis, the writer views materialism in the True Pure Land sect in the view point of Karl Marx. The analysis contains two basic questions to be answered. The first question is to mention the description of the True Pure Land sect in the story, and the second one is to convey materialism in the True Pure Land sect through the major and minor characters described in the work.

The thesis uses the Moral-Philosophical approach proposed by Guerin. The method of the analysis is by doing a library research, in where Fumio Niwa's *The Buddha Tree* becomes the writer's main source and other books related to the discussion become the secondary sources.

The analysis finds some changes in the True Pure Land sect described in the story, that are changes in some of their religious policies and the parishioners' view toward their spiritual life. In this story, there is an evidence that in a religious body, physical and spiritual needs collide – in this case is the tendency in valuing worldly pleasures more than spiritual needs in the True Pure Land sect.

ABSTRAK

Sasanti Nordewati. 2003. **Praktek Materialime di dalam Sekte Tanah Suci Budhisme Jepang yang terefleksikan oleh Tokoh Utama dan Pembantu di Niwa's *The Buddha Tree***. Yogyakarta: Jurusan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Sastra. Universitas Sanata Dharma.

Novel *The Buddha Tree* karya Fumio Niwa menceritakan tentang Soshu Getsudo, seorang pendeta Buddha dari perwakilan Butsuoji, sekte True Pure Land, yang terjebak dalam permasalahan yang cukup rumit. Sebagai seorang biksu, secara moral Soshu dinilai tidak kompeten karena dia menjalin hubungan gelap dengan ibu mertuanya sendiri. Selain terjebak dalam kenikmatan duniawi, Soshu juga dihadapkan pada kenyataan bahwa keberadaan perwakilan Butsuoji yang dipimpinnya terancam dengan munculnya sekte – sekte baru di kota Tan'ami serta sikap para pengikutnya yang cenderung mementingkan uang daripada kebutuhan spiritual mereka.

Dalam analisisnya, penulis merujuk pada teori materialisme historis yang dikemukakan oleh Karl Marx. Di dalam analisa ini, terdapat dua permasalahan mendasar. Pertama, bagaimana sekte True Pure Land dideskripsikan di dalam novel tersebut, dan bagaimana materialisme terungkap di dalam tubuh sekte True Pure Land melalui karakter – karakter dalam novel *The Buddha Tree*.

Dalam analisisnya, penulis menggunakan pendekatan filosofis moral yang diusung oleh Guerin. Metode yang diterapkan pada analisa ini adalah metode studi pustaka dimana novel *The Buddha tree* karya Fumio Niwa menjadi sumber utama penulis. Buku – buku lain yang berkaitan dengan topik pembahasan juga digunakan sebagai acuan.

Di dalam analisa ditemukan bahwa telah terjadi beberapa perubahan di dalam tubuh sekte True Pure Land, baik itu dalam kebijaksanaan – kebijaksanaan yang diterapkan maupun dari reaksi para pengikut sekte terhadap kehidupan spiritual mereka. Di dalam karya sastra ini, terdapat suatu pembuktian bahwa telah terjadi perbenturan pemenuhan kebutuhan jasmani dan rohani dalam tubuh suatu organisasi keagamaan yang dalam hal ini adalah kecenderungan sekte True Pure Land dalam menilai kepentingan kebutuhan jasmani lebih dari kebutuhan rohani.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Literature offers us pleasure and satisfaction. Literature diverts us. Literature turns our attention from serious thoughts or pursuits to something light, amusing, or lively. It empowers us temporarily to forget our problems (Perrine, 1969: 4). Thus, it is not wrong to say that literature can be a means for us to escape from our frustrating world even just for a while.

Nevertheless literature does not solely give us delight and satisfaction. Literature gives us more than that. Moody says that through literature, we gain something more than just pleasure:

And all of us who read literary work will find our knowledge broadened and deepened, whether in the individual, the social, the racial, or in the internal sphere; we shall understand the possibilities of human life, both for good and evil; we shall understand how we come to live at particular time and place, with all its pleasure and vexations and problems; we shall understand the ways onwards which are open to us, and we shall perhaps be able to make right rather than wrong choices (1968: 2-3).

Certainly literature can arouse our understanding of life and its problems. It is possible that we can be wiser in making decision and in facing problems after reading work of literature.

It is known that there are several categories or genres of literature. One of them is novel. In this thesis, the writer is interested to analyze a novel from Japanese literature. In this case, the writer uses a novel entitled *The Buddha Tree*, written by Fumio Niwa. Only with the help of Kenneth Strong, who has translated the novel into English, the writer is able to conduct this thesis.

In this study, the writer is interested in analyzing materialism reflected in religion, in this case is Japanese Buddhism through the major and minor characters presented in *The Buddha Tree*. In this study the writer puts her interest on Buddhism. The goal of Buddhism is interior enlightenment. The subject of Buddha's teaching is that the world we are living in is illusory and productive of suffering. Suffering is caused by desire and desire arises through our selfishness. Only by eliminating this cause, realizing the world and ourselves as they really are that sufferings will cease. The way to extinguish our fundamental illusions according to Buddhism is the Buddha's dharma or teaching (Bowring, 1993: 158).

In this study, the writer would like to reveal to the readers that materialism exists in Japanese Buddhism, particularly in the True Pure Land sect. In *Journal of Philosophy*, Paul Edwards states that materialism is a general view about what actually exists (1955: 65), and what exists is material or physical entities. Thus, things like food, clothes, money, and the world itself can be some of the examples of material or physical substances.

We recognize that human being has two different needs, physical and spiritual. We can categorize food, clothes, money and house as physical needs while religion or belief as spiritual need. Materialism deals with worldly pleasure while in Buddhism, it is said that desires and the world that we live in is the cause of human sufferings. Through *The Buddha Tree*, the writer wants to show that sometimes spiritual and physical needs collide in some ways. Basically, in her thesis, the writer wants to show the readers that in Fumio Niwa's *The Buddha Tree*, materialism exists in religion, in this case is Japanese Buddhism, which believes that the desires and the world we live in

is the cause of human sufferings.

B. Problem Formulation

Throughout this study, the writer would be concerned with several problems, which can be formulated into these following questions:

1. How is the True Pure Land sect described in Niwa's *The Buddha Tree*?
2. How do the characters convey materialism in the True Pure Land sect in the work?

C. Objectives of the Study

In this study the writer would like to discover how the True Pure Land sect is described in Fumio Niwa's *The Buddha Tree* and also the writer wants to find out how materialism in the Pure land sect conveyed through the major and minor characters in the work.

D. Benefits of the Study

The study of a Japanese literature would give the reader new information on world literature. The writer hopes that this study would encourage the reader to conduct further study not only on American or British literary works but also on others. Further, the study of *The Buddha Tree* written by Fumio Niwa gives us a chance to gain knowledge on one of the modern Japanese literary works.

This study also gives us a deeper understanding and view toward materialism and religion, particularly in a Japanese Buddhist church. It would broaden our perspective on religion as a social institution. This study on materialism and religion can open our viewpoint and knowledge on how money influences our life not only

politically or economically, but also through religion.

For the writer, the writer can broaden her understanding of the work. This study also makes the writer responsive of the social condition around her, in relation with religion. Finally this study would enrich the source of knowledge and information in the library of Sanata Dharma University.

E. Definition of Terms

The writer would like to explain the meaning of some of the terms used in her thesis, in order to shed light on the discussion. Some of the terms used in this study are Materialism, Buddhism, Sect, and Character.

1. Materialism

According to Karl Marx materialism is the view that the economic structure of society is the foundation of society; as the productive forces develop, the economic structure changes and with that political, legal, moral, religious, and philosophical ideas change accordingly (Audi, 1999: 265).

2. Buddhism

Buddhism is a religion founded by Gautama Buddha, which is believed to be the right way to free fellowmen from suffering. Buddhism is based on the four true principles of life known as the Buddha's Four Noble Truths; Life itself, which is full of sorrow, Desire as the cause of human misery, Extinguishing ego as the only way to end suffering, and Eight-Fold Path as the way to accomplish enlightenment. The Eight-Fold Path itself are: right views, right intentions, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right

effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration (Hane, 1991: 27–28).

3. Sect

A sect is defined as a relatively small religious group that has broken away from some other religious organization to renew what it views as the original vision of the faith (Schaefer, 1998: 427).

4. Character

Referring to *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, characters are the persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they said – the dialogue – and by what they do – the action (1981:20).

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Review of Related Studies

Souseki Natsume in his article entitled *Japan: In The Name of God* at <http://members.tripod.com/~Shido/ASCRPO4B.html> states that Fumio Niwa, without any doubt, presents an interesting dialogue between an agnostic and a troubled Buddhist priest, in his story *The Buddha Tree*, also known as *Bodaiju* (1966). The dialogue between the agnostic parishioner, Yosuke Tachi, and Soshu the priest on page 146-148 reveals not only Tachi's agnosticism but also Soshu's inconsistencies and doubts concerning with his own theological position. In Natsume's opinion, Fumio Niwa's *The Buddha Tree* deals almost exclusively with a Buddhist priest's view of his own ecclesiastical world.

Criticism is also given to another Fumio Niwa's work, *The Hateful Age*. Sally Hastings at www.ajiazaidan.org/English-non-graphics/forums/5-29-2001-sally.html states in her essay entitled *Female Nurturance and Postindustrial Society: How and When Filial Piety Became a Feminine Virtue* that *The Hateful Age* reflects the Japanese attitudes toward Japan's Confucian heritage, the filial piety, after the World War two. Japan is considered to be the fastest aging society in the world, a combination of the highest life expectancies in the world (83 for women and 77 for men) and a low birth rate. A large number of elderly with a much smaller number of young workers to support them affect everyone in the society. The food and housing shortages of the immediate era made elderly cares giving a particularly heavy burden for households. Hastings states that Fumio Niwa's short story *The Hateful Age* is a biting account of

three granddaughters, two of them are married the burden in caring for elders, they and their husbands bore. Further she states that Niwa expressed the resentment of the male characters with particular eloquence in this short story. In Hastings' opinion, *The Hateful Age* reveals the Japanese society ignorance toward the wisdom of Confucius on filial piety and respect for the aged.

At www.aasianst.org/absts/1997abst/inter/i109.htm, Patricia L. Parker states in her essay entitled *Literary Treatments of Old Age in Modern Japanese Fiction* that Fumio Niwa's *The Hateful Age* broke with tradition to present a picture of old age and senility (now seen as Alzheimer) as metaphor for a social problem that indicated sickness in society.

Hayase Keiichi, a nonfiction writer, states in his article, *Writing and the Aging Society*, that Fumio Niwa was the first writer after the end of the war to take up the theme of old age in his *Iyagarase no nenrei*, the Japanese form of *The Hateful Age*. The story depicts the bewilderment and struggle of the granddaughter of a very weak 86-year-old woman with a greedy appetite, kleptomaniac habits, and disgustingly untidy appearance. In Keiichi's opinion, Niwa did not consciously set out to write about the problem of age, but he simply recorded in fictional form something he had witnessed after evacuating to Tochigi district during the bombing of Tokyo realistically. Keiichi also states that *Iyagarase no nenrei* drew considerable attention although it appeared soon after the war when everyone was still suffering from the shortage of food, the time when getting enough to eat was something of a national obsession in Japan (www.jpf.go.jp/e/media/publish/4-04right.html).

From the above criticisms, we learn that at least two of Niwa's works, *The*

Buddha Tree and The Hateful Age, reveals human responses on their religious life. In his article, Natsume states that in The Buddha Tree, even the main character, Soshu, as a Buddhist priest has doubts on his own faith. The writer's thesis would emphasize more on the characters' attitudes toward their religion, which consequently stimulate materialistic atmosphere in the True Pure Land sect as a religious body.

B. Review of Related Theories

1. Review of Theories on Materialism

The term "matter", and its cognates ("material", "materialist", "materialistic", and the like) have played active parts in philosophical debate throughout intellectual history. Natural philosophers have studied material objects and compared them with immaterial objects as energy and fields of force; metaphysicians and mathematical philosophers have distinguished the tangible aspects of things from their intangible aspects, their physical properties from their geometrical ones. Once more, those terms have played parts not only in science, but also in moral philosophy and even theology. Matter has thus been placed in opposition to life and mind, soul and spirit and a preoccupation with worldly pleasure of bodily comforts, as opposed to "higher" pleasures of the mind has been considered as materialistic, and unworthy of spiritual beings (Edwards, 1967: 213).

Theories of any kind change with time. Various distinctions on one thing that were used in the medieval periods probably cannot be justified in the modern world. This of course immediately poses a historical problem, for men's ideas about things, including about matter have not been static. It is important for us to know the interpretation of theories on matter and its cognates throughout intellectual history.

1.1. Materialism in Greek Philosophy

The idea of material ingredient according to the Ionian school of philosophy is “things of all kinds”. Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle classified material substances into four contrasted states or kinds: solid (earth), aeriform (air), liquid (water), and fiery (fire). The fifth-century thinker Democritus viewed the world as consisting exclusively of an infinite number of material atoms whose interaction yielded new combinations (Payne, 1998: 336). To put it bluntly, the world itself is nothing but material thing.

Aristotle went further by saying that material ingredients are those that can be created and destroyed. He drew a clear distinction between the sublunary world, whose objects were composed of the four terrestrial elements – earth, air, water, and fire – and could be created and destroyed, and the superlunary or celestial world of the outer heavens, whose inhabitants were composed of the quintessence (5th essence) and exempted from change and decay. Of all terrestrial things only the souls and rational beings in any way shared this immutability (Edwards, 1967: 214).

To sum up, in the viewpoint of the Greek philosophy, the term of mater is interpreted simply as physical thing. Thus materialism is a term solely about material things, about anything composed or connected with physical substance, in which mind or spirit is not regarded.

1.2. Materialism in Later Classical and Medieval Periods

Later philosopher – whether in Hellenistic Alexandria (200 B.C.–A.D. 500), the Islamic centers of learning (650–1150), or the newly founded universities of Western Europe (950–1500) – introduced a number of variations into the discussion about matter without adding any important new themes. The ideas about matter closely related with

religious beliefs were brought up during these period of time. The philosophy of Epicurus strongly revealed the anti-religious motivation of materialism. Epicurus preached an ethics based on material reality and freedom from superstition. Further, his student, Lucretius attempted a “scientific” materialistic explanation of sensation, mental life, society, and cosmology, denying both human immortality and the existence of the soul. In *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius stated “nothing can ever be created by divine power over nothing” (Payne, 1998: 336–337). Basically, the Epicureans strongly rejected the existence of divine power or spiritual agencies in the existent of the world. They believed that even living things and/or organic beings were created from physical elements.

From the viewpoint of the Epicureans, we sense atheistical implications. Their rejection toward human immortality and the existence of the soul shows that they held on to strong materialism, that reality consists exclusively of material things and their varying combinations. In spite of the atheistical implications, their point of view on materialism is not much of a difference with Plato and Aristotle’s statement on materialism.

1.3. Materialism in Marxist Theory

Marxism was founded by Friederich Engels (1820–95) and Karl Heinrich Marx (1818–83). In *A Handbook To Literature*, Holman defines Marxism as the social, economic, and political doctrine of Karl Marx, Friederich Engels, and their disciples (1986: 228). Doctrine itself is defined by Nels Anderson as the tenants of a philosophy or ways of life, or of a religion (Fairchild, 1975: 97).

In Marxism, materialism has been seen through the viewpoint of economy.

Economy has become the main factor – despite of political – of the class struggle. The premise of this conception is that man tends to satisfy his material needs by means of producing (Payne, 1998: 327). It would lead us to the term of historical materialism, a conception central to Marxist theory. It is the view that the economic structure of society is the foundation of society; as the productive forces develop, the economic structure changes and with that political, legal, moral, religious, and philosophical ideas change accordingly (Audi, 1999: 265). In other words, we can say that man's desires or needs of material things are able to change not only his own life but also his society.

The basic principle of the historical materialism viewpoint is that the human conscience does not determine man's condition, on the contrary it is man's social structure that determines human conscience. Marx argues that human conscience does not determine the development of a society. It is not what a society think about themselves but it is about the real condition of the society itself. Further Marx states that man's social condition is the production or the work itself. He argues that men are determined by their production, whether it is their product or their means of producing. Thus, individuals depend on their material condition. Marx explains that hand-operated mill produces feudal society while machine-operated mill creates industrial capitalist society. In other words, history is determined by material condition. Thus, Marx uses the term of materialism not in the philosophical way – as a belief that the world consists only of material substances – but in the means of showing the factors that determine history. The factor itself according to Marx is not the human mind but the human material condition and the material condition are not elements such as race, weather, way of eating, etc., but the production of human material needs. The means of man to

get what he needs in life is what Marx said to be the human condition (Magnis Suseno, 2001: 138-140).

Eric Fromm states that historical materialism claims that human means of producing determines their way of thinking and their desires. Certain economic condition as the main factor in Marx's historical materialism, such as capitalism, creates desire toward money and possession; other economic conditions can create opposite desires, such as ascetism and avoidance from worldly pleasure that can be found in many eastern cultures and in the early periods of capitalism. Desire toward money and possessions, according to Marx, is a contradictory with eastern culture because the desire toward money and possession is economically conditioned (2001, 17-18).

2. Review of Theories on Religion

Cultural universals were identified as general practices found in every culture such as dancing, food preparation, the family, language, and personal names. Religion is said to be a cultural universal for its religious practices are evident in all societies. Since religion is a cultural universal, it fulfills several basic functions within human societies. In sociological terms, these include both manifest and latent functions. Among the manifest (open and stated) functions of religion are defining the spiritual world and giving meaning to the divine. Because of its beliefs concerning the people's relationship to a beyond, religion provides an explanation for events that seem difficult to understand. Latent functions of religion are unintended, covert or hidden. Church services provide a manifest function by offering a forum for religious worship; at the same time, they fulfill a latent function as a meeting ground for unattached members (Schaefer, 1998: 414-417).

In viewing religion as a social institution, religion has two functions: as an integrative power and as a social control. In Durkheim's point of view, religion can be an integrative power in human society. Generally human societies are composed of individuals and social groups with diverse interests and aspiration. Religion can be a means of integrating people from diversity, just like nationalism or patriotism. It gives them certain ultimate values and ends to hold in common. These values and ends help a society to function as an integrated social system (Schaefer, 1998: 418). Paloutzian supports the statement by saying that religion could be a positive social institution that helped to bring people together and stabilize society. This was accomplished by religion functioning as that which contained and perpetuated necessary social and moral codes and that which made it possible for people to overcome "anomie" or isolation (1996: 10).

Karl Marx described religion as an "opiate" particularly harmful to oppress people. In his view, religion often drugged the masses into submission by offering a consolation for their harsh lives on earth: the hope of salvation in an ideal afterlife. From Marx's perspective, however, religion promotes stability within society and therefore helps to perpetuate patterns of social inequality. In a society with several religious faiths, the dominant religion will represent the ruling economic and political class. Marx was concerned that religion would reinforce social control within an oppressive society (Schaefer, 1998: 420).

In *The Sociology of Religion*, Thomas F. O'Dea states that religion socializes norms and ends; it supports the disciplines of society in important respects; it offers support in uncertainty, consolation in disappointment and defeat; it contributes to the

developing identity of the individual (1966: 14–15).

Inside religion there are several organizations of religious behavior: ecclesiae, denomination, cult, and sect to name a few. This discussion particularly concerns with sect. A sect can be defined as a relatively small religious group that has broken away from some other religious organization to renew what it views as the original vision of the faith. Examples are True Pure Land sect, Nichiren, Jehovah's witnesses, and Amish (Schaefer, 1998: 427).

In *Sociology*, Schaefer defined an ecclesia as a religious organization that claims to include most or all of the members of a society and it is recognized as the national or official religion (1998: 425). Examples of ecclesiae are Buddhism in Thailand and Islam in Saudi Arabia. Buddhism is a majority in Thailand as well as Islam in Saudi Arabia, therefore recognized as the national religions. Hinnels supports this theory, saying that the membership of an ecclesia includes a whole nation (1984: 289).

Next to ecclesia is denomination. A denomination is a large, organized religion, an outgrowth of ecclesia (Schaefer, 1998: 425). A denomination is in fact a part of an ecclesia, having somewhat different interpretation on their doctrines (1998: 429). The term denominationalism – a continuation of the organizations, and emphasis on the divisions and distinctions – (Kauffman, 1985: 147) supports the above statement in which a denomination is a development of an ecclesia with varied doctrine interpretations. There is no distinct difference between ecclesiae and denominations except that denominations are not considered as the official religions of a nation and that both religious organizations – ecclesiae and denominations – have different interpretations on their doctrines.

A cult is a generally small, secretive religious group that represents either a new religion or a major innovation of an existing faith. Unlike sects, cults normally do not result from schisms or break with established ecclesiae or denominations. The affiliation of a sect is based on conscious acceptance of a specific religious dogma while some cults, such as contemporary cults focused on UFO sightings, may be totally unrelated to the existing faiths in a culture. Given example is “Supreme truth” cult or “Aum Shinrikyo” in Japan (Schaefer, 1998: 427 – 428).

In general there are three major religions in Japan, namely Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Shinto is the name given to the religious cults, which existed in Japan before the arrival of Buddhism. The principal objects of worship in Shinto from the earliest times until the present day are divinities known as *Kami*. These are shadowy, formless entities, largely devoid of personality and resembling rather impersonal manifestations of power. The Kami fell into several characteristics. First, they have no shape of their own. To manifest themselves they must be summoned or cajoled into a vessel of suitably inviting form (Bowring, 1993: 152). Shinto centered on the animistic worship of natural phenomena – the sun, mountains, trees, water, and rocks – totemistic ancestors were also included among the kami or deities. Deities are worshipped through offerings, prayers, the clapping of one’s hands to gain their attention, and, at larger shrines, light-hearted festivals. Unlike Buddhism, Shinto is unconcerned with the problem of the afterlife (Reischauer, 1988: 208). The main concern of Shinto is fertility. Ceremonies are held to obtain good satisfying harvest (Bellah, 1992: 85).

Confucianism is a tradition of moral, cultural, and political teaching that

originated in ancient China. It takes its name from its founder Kang Fuzi (551–479 BC), whose name was latinized by European missionaries as Confucius. Confucius was a minor official who aspired to reform the violent and unstable Chinese society of his time. He considered that self-fulfillment was best achieved in harmonious but hierarchical social context, through mastering a code of behavior, through moral and cultural self-development, and through the exercise of administrative responsibility on the basis of merit. Confucius attached importance to family values, particularly filial piety (the obedience of a son to his father), and to education (Bowring, 1993: 165).

Reischauer states that Confucianism stressed a rational natural order, of which man was a harmonious element, and a social order based on strict ethical rules and centering on a unified state, governed by men of education and superior ethical wisdom. It had revered texts but no concept of deity, no priesthood, and very little religious ritual. There was no worship, only right thinking and right living, as shown particularly through loyalty to the ruler, filial piety to one's father, and strict observance of proper social ritual and etiquette (1988: 203). Confucianism itself was transmitted to Japan from Korea probably in the fifth century.

The last one is Buddhism. Buddhism concerns with the afterlife and salvation of the individual. The historical Buddha or "enlightened one", who was roughly contemporary with Confucius, started with the basic Indian idea of a never-ending cycle of lives, each determining the next, and added to this the concepts that life is painful, that its suffering derives from human attachment or desires, but that these desires can be overcome by the Buddha's teaching, thus freeing the individual for painless merging with the cosmos in Nirvana, or "nothingness". As the teaching developed, it came to

stress reverence for the “Three Treasures”, which were the Buddha, the “law” or teachings embodied in an extensive literature, and the religious community, meaning monastic organizations (Reischauer, 1988: 205).

Gautama Buddha is said to be the first man who was completely awakened to the reality of life. Because of that he is called as “The Supremely Awakened One”. He discovered the non-egoness of life and the mortality of this world. He freed himself from selfishness, fame, wealth, and the attachment to worldly affairs. What he achieved is probably very difficult for us to do. Gautama Buddha then becomes the model of the Buddhist to follow (Matsunami, 1987: 14).

There are two main schools in Buddhism, namely Mahayana or the Greater Vehicle and Hinayana, also known as the Lesser Vehicle. Mahayana Buddhism extended into China, Korea, and Japan. The other one extended into Southeast Asia. In Japan Mahayana Buddhism is still divided into sects. There are Nichiren, Zen, and Jodo sects to name a few. Jodo sect is also known as Pure Land sect, which is founded in the year of 1175 by Honen (Hane, 1991: 52).

In their development, the three major religions in Japan – Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism – are considered homogeneous. In *Religi Tokugawa*, Bellah states that some borrowing processes have emerged between Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism, and therefore some would tend to combine some general elements in all religions mentioned and label them as the Japanese religion (1992: 79). An example of the borrowing process is Buddhism ascetic practices in Shinto. Shinto borrows Buddhism ascetic practices, such as isolation from the world, a diet consisting of the products of trees, and repetition of holy formulae – in order to achieve union and fusion

with Kami (Bowring, 1993: 155).

The religious life of the Japanese shows that the borrowing process between the three religions is pretty intense.

All in all, religion in Japan offers a confused and indistinct picture. Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples are found everywhere. The lives of most Japanese are intertwined with religious observances – shrine festivals, “god shelves” and Buddhist funerals, and other religious rites of passage. But the majority of Japanese – some 70 to 80 percent – even though carried on the rolls of one or more religious body, do not consider themselves believers in any religion. The ethics of the Japanese for the most part are derived from Confucianism, to which none now “belongs”, and from Christianity, which is the faith of less than 2 percent. Popular religious customs are derived mostly from traditional Shinto and Buddhism (Reischauer, 1988: 215).

The confusion and indistinct picture offered by religion in Japan show that homogeneity is taking process. People conduct religious rituals or services of more than one religious body but do not regard themselves as believers of any particular religion. The ethics of Confucianism are now considered as the ethics of the Japanese in general. Religious customs are derived mostly from Shinto and Buddhism.

Regardless the fact that Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism are considered as homogeneous, some sects emphasize particular general teaching more than the others, and each sect form their teaching in somewhat different constellations (Bellah, 1992: 79).

3. Reviews of Theories on Character

In *A Glossary of Literary Terms fourth edition*, Abrams states that characters are persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work. The readers interpret characters as being endowed with moral and dispositional qualities. Those qualities are expressed in what the characters say – the dialogue – and by what they do – the action (1981: 20).

Meaning to say, a character is born with some moral qualities and also natural qualities. Holman clearly says that a character is described as an example of some vice or virtue or type, such as a glutton, a happy milkmaid, a bumpkin, a garrulous, an old man, etc. (1986: 81).

E.M. Foster in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927) distinguished character into two types, namely flat and round characters. A flat character is presented without much individualizing detail and therefore can be fairly described in a single phrase or sentence. A round character is complex in temperament and motivation and is presented with subtle particularity. Thus, a round character is described in a more fully way (Abrams, 1981: 20).

If Foster distinguished character into flat and round, W.J. Harvey grouped character into two categories, the protagonists and background characters. The protagonists are the most important characters. Their motivation and history are most fully established. They have conflicts and they change as the story progress. They are the vehicles by which all the most interesting questions are raised; they evoke our beliefs, sympathies, revulsion; they incarnate the moral vision of the world inherent in the total novel. They are what the novel exists for (1965: 56). The author basically uses them as a vehicle to reveal his or her main idea; of what he or she wants to say in their work.

Background characters may be almost entirely anonymous, although they also have intensity and depth. Judging from the types of characters offered by both Forster and Harvey, we may have two basic types of characters, major and minor characters. We can say that flat and/or background characters are minor while round and/or

protagonist are major characters. Perrine supported this concept by saying that minor characters must necessarily remain flat (1969: 4).

According to Perrine, an author may present his or her characters either directly or indirectly. In direct presentation, the author tell us straight out, by exposition on analysis, what a character is like, or has someone else in the story tell us what he or she is like. The method has the advantages of being clear and economical, however it can never be used alone. To make a story, the characters must act; if they were not then what the author has is an essay. The direct method should also be supported by the indirect presentation to make the story emotionally convincing, because in indirect presentation the author shows us the characters in action: from what he thinks, says, or does (1986: 68 – 69).

To be more convincing, Perrine states that characterization must also observe three other principles. Firstly, characters must be consistent in their behavior; the character's changing behavior must be accompanied with sufficient reasons (1969: 69). Abrams emphasized this statement by saying that "the character should not suddenly break off and act in a way not plausibly grounded in his temperament as we have already come to know it (1981: 20). It does not mean that a character cannot have any changes in his or her behavior, but if there is any, then it is should be accompanied with clearly sufficient reasons.

Secondly, the characters must be clearly motivated in whatever they do, especially when there are some changes in their behavior. The reader must understand the reasons for what they do and the changing behavior of the characters. Finally, the characters must be plausible or lifelike. The author must present the characters as if they

were real, that they could appear somewhere in the normal course of events (Perrine, 1969: 69).

C. Theoretical Framework

The writer uses at least three theories for the discussion. They are theories of materialism, theories of religion, and theories of characters. The writer uses theories of materialism due to the topic of the discussion. Theories of materialism help the writer to understand the nature of matter and of materialism itself. In the previous part of this chapter the writer mentioned theories of materialism seen from three different perspectives for comparison. Nevertheless, in the end, the writer considers that Karl Marx's theory on materialism is the most appropriate theory that represents the idea of materialism in Japanese Buddhism conveyed in *The Buddha Tree*.

Theories of religion are needed because religion is one of the writer's concerns in the discussion, aside from materialism. The writer thinks that it is necessary for her to give sufficient information on religion in Japan before analyzing Japanese Buddhism since there are several religions existed in Japan. The theories of religion give valuable information about religion in general and its other aspects, which would be a supportive knowledge for the writer in answering the problem formulation.

The theories of characters are needed in the thesis because in the analysis, the writer sees the major and minor characters in the work as the vehicle in revealing materialism in the True Pure Land sect of the Japanese Buddhism.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Object of the Study

The work that will be analyzed is Fumio Niwa's *The Buddha Tree*. It is a novel and it is a Japanese literary work. The novel is divided into 36 chapters, and it is compiled in 380 pages. The work is originally published in Japanese entitled *Bodaiju* in 1966. The one that the writer uses for the discussion is the English version of the novel, which is translated by Kenneth Strong. The writer uses the tenth printing of the English version, published by Tuttle Publishing by special arrangement with Peter Owen Limited, London.

B. The Approach

According to Guerin in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, there are five theories of approaches, namely the historical-biographical, the moral-philosophical, the formalistic, the psychological, and the mythological approaches (1979: 25-155).

In this study the writer uses the moral-philosophical approach in order to analyze materialism in Japanese Buddhism, particularly in True Pure Land sect conveyed by the major and minor characters in the work. The moral-philosophical approach is one of the approaches proposed by Guerin, which believes that the largest function of literature is to teach morality and to probe philosophical issues. Some literary works such as Twain's *The Adventure of Huck Finn* and Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* talk to the readers about the problems of slavery in the United States and Eliot's

Scenes Of Clerical Life probes the dilemma of the clerical life of the main character. These literary works function as more than just something to read but also as something to think deeply about. The critics who employ the moral-philosophical approach think that the important thing is the moral or philosophical teaching and the critics would interpret literature within a context of the philosophical thought of a period or group (Guerin, 1979: 25-26).

Wellek says that it is possible for literature to be seen as a philosophical thought or also as a thought wrapped in a special form (1995: 134). Thus, literary works are analyzed to reveal great thoughts. Unger states that literature is an expression of general attitude toward life and that literature tends to reveal philosophical problems (Wellek, 1995: 141). Therefore, a literary work is the writer's response toward (philosophical) problems in life. The reason for the writer to use the moral-philosophical approach is to reveal the philosophical thoughts and/or philosophical problems drawn out by Fumio Niwa in *The Buddha Tree*.

C. Method of the Study

The method used in the study is library method. There are some steps that need to be done in this senior paper. First, the writer read the text and tried to respond to the text as a whole. The writer uses the text as the primary source of the analysis to find how a Japanese Buddhist church is described and how materialism is conveyed in the work through the major and minor characters. It is necessary for the writer to read the text again and again carefully, because the first impression tended to be unreliable (Burton, 1977: 18).

Next, the writer also tries to read the secondary data about materialism, religion, characters, and other books, which could assist the writer in her analysis. The secondary data were taken from many sources such as: Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature* (1956), *Pre-modern Japan - A historical Survey* written by Mikiso Hane (1991), Guerin's *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (1979), also Abrams' *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (1981).

The writer uses the moral–philosophical approach for the analysis as the next step. In the analysis the writer needs to make an objective and reasonable analysis on the work. Therefore, the writer should understand the whole context of the work (Burton, 1977: 18–19). In the analysis the writer would focus her discussion on Japanese Buddhism and convey materialism in the Pure Land sect through the major and minor characters. Finally, the writer would find the result of her analysis as the conclusion.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS



A. The Description of the True Pure Land Sect

In revealing the True Pure Land sect circumstances, the writer also analyses some major and minor characters related to the sect, referring to Schaefer (1998: 427) that a sect is a small group of people whose faith has broken away from some other religious organization. The writer would like to mention some of the major and minor characters in the story related to the sect - Soshu as the priest of the Butsuoji temple, Mineyo, Mosuke Yamaji as the most influential person in the sect as the major characters and also later on the parishioners as the minor characters and their responses toward the sect - because the writer considers that it is necessary to give some information on them since they are parts of the sect itself.

A.1 The Major Characters

The three characters below are considered to be the major characters of the story because of some reasons. First, the author of the story describes them more fully than the rest of the characters – the minor characters-. Second, the characters have conflicts that arise from the beginning up to the end of the story and basically these characters are the author's vehicle to make the story goes.

A.1.1 Soshu Getsudo

The priest of the Butsuoji temple is Soshu and he is one of the major characters in the story. Soshu is thirty-eight years old. He is tall, not tonsured like most priests, he has a broad forehead that gives him the air of wisdom, and large rather melancholy eyes (p. 24). Soshu is described as a handsome priest with prominent nose and high forehead

(p.31). Soshu is the second son of a priest of an important temple of the Takada branch of the True Pure Land sect, to which Butsuoji belonged. In his friends' point of view, Soshu is quiet and pleasant, but weak young man, especially when it comes to girls.

Mineyo was told by some of his friends, students older than himself, how he had come to them in distress, much to their amusement, because a girl student at a sewing school near his lodging had sent him an anonymous love letter, and he did not know what to do with it (p. 40).

Despite his status as a Buddhist priest, Soshu has a wife. He is married to Renko, the daughter of Mineyo. He knows Renko since he was twenty years old. Mineyo adapted Soshu at that time and she paid his school fees. Renko was only eleven back then when Soshu was intended to be her husband (p.40). From his marriage with Renko, he has an eight years old son, Ryokun (p.17).

In his marriage life with Renko, Soshu has an affair with Mineyo. Their secret intimacy has been going on since Soshu was a student, before his marriage. Soshu's weakness as a priest is his uncontrolled lust toward woman. He cannot control himself once Mineyo seduces him.

A helpless prisoner of the lust she had inflamed, his body no longer his control, he lacked the shame, fear of the future, guilt towards his wife – all such feelings were swallowed in the fires of lust. Mineyo knew Soshu's weakness perfectly. He had always been like that, surrendering instantly to her stronger will, ever since she had first known him as a student (p. 41).

A.1.2 Mineyo Getsudo

Another major character in the story is Mineyo Getsudo, Soshu's mother-in-law. Mineyo is described as a pretty old woman who can make herself still look attractive with her make-up on her face and with the way she dressed. In her old age,

Mineyo's taste of clothes and make-up sometimes infuriates her daughter, Renko.

She was fifty-three, and had a bad complexion. Early in the morning her face was full of blotches and wrinkles. But once her make-up was finished, everyone said she couldn't be more than forty-five or six, an estimate of which she seemed to be proud. Mineyo's taste in dress and make-up infuriated Renko. Even now, his grandmother wore a pink under-kimono, and was careful to let it show at the neck (p.17-18).

Mineyo likes to get others' attention with the way she dresses. She wants others to see her beauty as a young widow in the neighborhood.

The young widow's beauty was striking enough to be admired even by other women. It was her habit to emphasize her attractions by always wearing long and unusually close-fitting kimonos, which led to murmurs that she was no lady for a temple (p. 40).

Mineyo hates her daughter, Renko because she herself has a hidden passion for Soshu. When the parishioners wanted Renko and Soshu to get married, Mineyo always found excuses to postpone their marriage. However, in the end, Mineyo has to agree to avoid negative statements from others.

When Renko was eighteen, the parishioners urged Mineyo to make arrangements for her marriage to Soshu, but she said it was still too early. To similar hints a year later she gave the same answer. Another year passed, and as Renko was twenty and Soshu twenty-nine, Mineyo could no longer find an excuse to put the wedding off. She herself was now forty-three. Renko, who had grown up knowing nothing of the world or of men, became the young priest's wife. Mineyo began to hate her daughter (p. 40).

A.1.3 Mosuke Yamaji

Aside from Soshu and Mineyo, there is another major character, who has a big influence toward the Butsuoji temple. His name is Mosuke Yamaji. Yamaji is a stock-jobber. He is the second most influential member of the congregation after his brother (p. 56). People of the Butsuoji consider Yamaji as one of the most important men for the

True Pure Land sect because he is wealthy. The Butsuoji people respect him because Yamaji gives offerings higher than anybody else in the temple community. In fact, the money offerings he gives to the temple are higher than those of all the rest of the congregation put together (p. 220). Yamaji also described to be a president of a security company. Yamaji divorces his first wife because he thinks that she is not attractive anymore. His first wife is the daughter of a farmer with peasant's thick hands and feet and hair burnt brown by the sun. As his position improves, he finds such a wife a drawback and so he divorces her on the ground that he could not take her into company (p.214).

A.2 The Minor Characters

Basically, the minor characters in the novel are the anonymous parishioners. Most of the Butsuoji parishioners live as farmers. Some of those farmers quite well-to-do and therefore they are important to Butsuoji (p. 162). Besides working in the fields, the farmers' wives also running the temple. They prepare the vegetarian meal and sake when the temple holds religious services (p.65). In the novel, the author describes them as neglectful people, concerning with their faith. The parishioners think that they can buy salvation with money.

“That’s Mrs. Komiyama you’re talking about?”

“What does she do?”

“Nothing...”

“How much does she give to the temple?”

“A lot – you’d be surprised how much. She’s one of the exceptions – most people in town don’t take much interest in the temple nowadays. Salvation really means something to her”(p. 164).

The parishioners only care a little for their religious lives. They do not care about their priest’s sermons because they care more about money. They care about how

much money their neighbors give to their temple, on how they would be able to compete the others in giving money contributions for their temple and not about their spiritual lives (p. 70) and they lost respect toward their temple and faith, by treating it more as a funeral ceremonies place rather than as a place to worship. They only come to the temple only when funerals are held and when they have problems in their lives (p. 61).

A.3 The True Pure Land Sect

The temple discussed in *The Buddha Tree* is the Butsuoji temple, also called the Temple of the Merciful Buddha. The Butsuoji temple belonged to the True Pure Land sect, one of the sects in Buddhism. Butsuoji temple is located on the outlying part of a town called Tan'ami. The temple possesses an area near by, used for the cemetery, in which Shoju's dwelling is located.

The temple was in the outskirts of the town of Tan'ami, and the hill with the cemetery about three quarters of a mile further out. Ahead rose the hill, with Shoju's cottage in the middle of the cemetery, looming unexpectedly large among the scattered gravestones. Both cemetery and cottage belonged to the temple (p. 19).

The temple is used not only for religious purposes. The Getsudo family, the priest of the Butsuoji temple family, occupies some of the rooms in the temple. They live there. Soshu the priest, his wife Renko, their eight years old son Ryokun, and the mother-in-law, Mineyo Getsudo, occupy the place.

There were no rooms in the house smaller than ten mats.¹ Two rooms, though part of the same building, formed a kind of annexe, separated from the main quarters by the kitchen. Originally used as the maid's room and storeroom, they had been converted into proper living – rooms, and were now occupied by Renko. Mineyo had taken

¹ The size of Japanese rooms is always measured by the number of standard-size mats required to cover the floor (p.27).

the room with the family shrine for herself; Soshu, the Lute Room, a twelve-mat room, so called from a lute stand in one corner (p. 27).

The True Pure Land sect described in the story has some temples and Butsuoji temple is just one of its temple that is located in the town of Tan'ami. Another temple of this sect mentioned in the story is the Senshuji temple (p. 193). True Pure Land sect has some branches, and each branch supervises some temples. The Butsuoji and Senshuji temple belonged to the Takada branch of the True Pure Land sect, and Senshuji temple is the headquarters of the temples belonged to the Takada branch. The sect establishes an organization. The members are selected from the temples of the branch, and their job is to manage the affairs of the sect.

At Senshuji temple, the headquarters of the Takada branch of the True Pure Land sect, to which Butsuoji belonged, the affairs of the sect are administrated by a priestly equivalent of a cabinet and parliament, whose members are selected from time to time at a conference of priests from the branch temples (p. 32).

The True Pure Land sect has a rule in gaining parishioners. People who do not have any connection with the Butsuoji temple, for example, have to fill up some kind of application forms first, to be the Butsuoji parishioners. Another way to gain parishioners is when young people from families that are already belonged to Butsuoji temple setting up new families. In the True Pure Land sect it is forbidden to go from person to person to ask for votes in order to obtain new members. This becomes an agreement among the temples of the sect, and increases of members in their congregation are pretty rare due to the prohibition.

Apart from occasional applications from people with no previous connection with the temple, the only way in which Butsuoji acquired new members was when young people in the families of existing members married and set up new households. To canvass for new members was unthinkable, it was, in fact, forbidden, by agreement

among all the temples (p. 60).

Like in political world, there are also elections in the True Pure Land sect. The elections are called as the Honzan elections. The elections are held to choose the council that would be on duty in the central temple of the True Pure Land sect. From the elections, some priests, from the related temples, would be chosen to lead and supervise some departments in the sect's organization.

The organization of this temple, Senshuji, resembles that of the Government and Diet. The rules are strict. Besides, the Council, there are the Executive Board, the Administration Office, the Committee on Doctrine, and the General and Delegate Assemblies of Laymen, each having its part in the enactment, administration, and enforcement of the general regulations of the sect, and together forming a miniature state (p. 169).

In order to join in the nomination for the Council in the elections, there are some requirements that the candidates have to consider. The candidates are the priests that belonged to the True Pure Land sect. The candidates must be over twenty-five and have devoted sometimes of their lives in temples or preaching house. Some priests that meet the standard requirements to vote would choose the candidates to be in the council. The Honzan elections also require some other qualifications that have no relation to religious matter.

Soshu had the right to vote in elections for the council, as does any priest over twenty who has lived for at least six months in a designated temple, branch temple or preaching-house, an electoral register being compiled shortly before each election takes place. Any priest over twenty-five who has spent a year or more in a designated temple is eligible for nomination – with the exception of “persons physically or mentally incapable, bankrupts, persons undergoing terms of imprisonment, under probation or having been under probation within a period of one year prior to the election, and persons in arrear with contributions to the central temple”: such people also being deprived of the right to vote (p. 169–170).

From the quotation above, it is clear that priests who have physical or mental disabilities, suffer from bankruptcy, ever have criminal records and/or have financial problems with the central temple are not allowed to join the nomination or to be the voters in the Honzan election.

In the Honzan elections, besides somebody's reputation, money is somewhat crucial. Instead of considering the nominees and the voters' morality or their qualifications in theology, the committee of the Honzan elections prefers to put their interest in the candidates and the voters' financial status. Yet, that is how the election is always conducted.

Elections are conducted in the usual way: a candidate is required to submit his candidature and a deposit of five thousand yen to the General Affairs Office of the sect during the period beginning with the official announcement of the election and ending fifteen days before the election itself (p. 170).

In their teaching, the True Pure Land sect put their faith only to Amida Buddha. They worship Him only and they believe that they would get salvation only by calling His name, and to call on His name means to recite nenbutsu².

What is the way of peace? Hear now the teaching of our master. To call on Amida with one's whole soul, casting upon Him and the power of His Original Vow³ all our fear of death and the hereafter; repeat His holy name of Amida in unwavering faith by day and by night, as long as our lives shall last; this is the true peace of the soul (p. 54).

Every day Soshu and Shoju conduct morning prayers. Shoju's duties are to prepare the morning rice-offerings for Amida and Shinran, to light the candles and

² An avocation, or prayer, much used in Pure Land Buddhism. It consists of the three words "Namu Amida Butsu", sometimes translated as "Homage to Amida Buddha" (p. 30).

³ The Vow in which Amida is said to have declared that he would not accept enlightenment for himself unless he could be sure that all the sentient beings would be saved by faith in him (p. 54).

censers. Then, together they would conduct the morning prayers, recite nenbutsu and read only the Amida Sutra.

The old priest disappeared in the direction of the temple hall with the box containing the ten brass tables. He deposited the box in a corner of the recess, and went behind the altar to start lighting the candles. Their columns of white smoke began to rise as he lit the incense sticks and arranged them in their places. Last of all, he distributed the rice-offerings. Soshu dropped the incense powder in the burner, bowed and clasped hands, and took his place before the altar. To his right, sat Shoji; erect and solemn as he faced the sutra table and gong. Soshu began to recite nenbutsu, then read the sutra. At Butsuoji, it was the custom to use only the Amida Sutra (p. 31-32)

The priest of the Butsuoji temple, Soshu, also gives religious services door-to-door. Usually, his parishioners would ask him to visit them in their houses and then to read sutra for them. There are two kinds of services that Soshu gives. First reading sutras for the benefit of the dead family members and then for the family itself. Soshu would receive some money as their offerings to the temple, whenever he reads sutras in their houses.

Two accounts are given of the meaning and purpose of such services. According to the first, the relatives ask the priest to come and read the sutras for the benefit of the deceased. For this service – reading sutras in the prescribed manner - the priest receives money offering from the family. The other interpretation of these services is that they are expressions of gratitude to Amida Buddha for his mercy. There is no suggestion of acquiring merit for oneself by holding the service (p. 51-52).

The True Pure Land sect has made some changing in some of the religious rules. The priests of the True Pure Land sect and in this case, of the Butsuoji temple, are allowed to eat meat and to marry; things that were forbidden for the Buddhist priests to do in the past. Shinran, the founder of the True Pure Land sect, is the pioneer of the changing rules. Shinran fights for those exceptions because he believes that no one in

this world can escape him or herself from any sins due to their limitations.

Thanks to the agony Shinran had been through, for seven hundred years priests like Soshu had been allowed to marry and to eat flesh. Buddhism recognizes five sins: the taking of life, theft, fornication, lying, and intemperance, or transgressing the prohibition against drinking and eating flesh. One can hardly live without ever committing any of the five – and today, even to mention such possibility is to invite a derisive smile at one's inhuman notions. Man cannot escape from his earthly limitations by any efforts of his own – everyone accepts that nowadays; it is only common sense. But seven hundred years ago in Japan it was not so (p. 63 – 64).

Shinran believes that by changing those rules – to be able to eat flesh and to marry – he has prevented the priests, at least the priests of the True Pure Land sect, from committing sins. The priests of his time have lived with strict religious rules for all their lives. They want to do what they want as ordinary human beings but are afraid to do openly due to the rules they have to live with. Thus, by permitting those forbidden things for the priests of the True Pure Land sect, Shinran helps them not to carry out hidden sins.

The ordinary priests of Shinran's time were imprisoned in a rigid code of conventions and illusory doctrines. It is easy to imagine how infuriated they were by his marriage, which they denounced as a brazen sin. Many of them committing the very same sin, but never openly (p. 64).

Although the priests of the True Pure Land sect are allowed to eat flesh or meat, the Getsudo family – Soshu's family – always eat rice and they do not eat meat at breakfast. The Getsudos always eat vegetarian breakfast at Butsuoji. They always eat the rice that has been offered on the altar at the morning prayers (p. 34). However, there are some occasions where priest drink sake or eat flesh. When Soshu visits his parishioners' houses to recite nenbutsu and read the sutras, sometimes the hosts would offer him some meal and sake too. The meal served sometimes would be more lavish

and not strictly vegetarian (p. 55). In some other occasions, such as on celebration days, the meal served by the women is vegetarian meal but with sake accompanying it.

Fire was burning merrily behind the each of the five fuel-holes in the big kitchen stove at Butsuoji. Ten or twelve women were busily cooking vegetarian meal and preparing sake for between thirty and forty people. More than half of the women were farmers' wives from the center of the town. The occasion was the last autumn service in memory of St. Shinran, which was now being held at the temple hall (p. 65).

Changing rules also applied in the offerings for the temple. In the past, the priests chose the offerings for the temple very carefully. They used a book to guide them in choosing the right offerings for the temple. However, nowadays the rules on serving the right offerings for the temple are abandoned. In the past, only clean, and pure rice cakes and dumplings that could be served but now quality is not considered anymore. This does not happen only in Butsuoji temple but also the others.

The Book of Observances prescribed how the offerings shall be chosen: "In the case of flowers and all other offerings for the shrine, reverence is the first principle. Only rice cakes and dumplings that are clean and pure may be offered. It is prohibited to offer cakes bought from common shops, or cakes of more than one color." But here the ancient rules had been forgotten when the temples came to substitute the form of religion for such reality. They had not been faithful to their founder, to whom such formalism was anathema. Butsuoji was no exception. The glutinous red and white cakes were of poor quality, like the cheapest kind of rakugan⁴ (p. 68–69).

The Butsuoji temple of the True Pure Land sect teachings are based only on Amida Buddha. One of the Amida's teachings is salvation. Previously, it is mentioned that the parishioners of the Butsuoji temple can only gain salvation by reciting nenbutsu, to call on His name. However, apparently some of the parishioners think that to gain salvation, they do not have to really pay their attention on reciting nenbutsu. Some of

the parishioners – or perhaps most of them - think that they can get salvation by giving more money to the temple as contribution.

“That’s Mrs. Komiyama you’re talking about?”

“What does she do?”

“Nothing...”

“How much does she give to the temple?”

“A lot – you’d be surprised how much. She’s one of the exceptions – most people in town don’t take much interest in the temple nowadays. Salvation really means something to her”(p. 164).

The people of the Butsuoji temple seem to care less to their religious lives. They do go to the temple to join some services or to listen to the sermons conducted by their priests. However, actually they are not really listening. Their concentration on listening to the sermons is distracted when the time comes for them to give money offerings to the temple, put it in the collection bowls. They do not care much about the sermon any more, instead they are eager to know about how much money each one of them has put inside the bowls.

With the handing round of collection bowls at the end of the first part, the atmosphere suddenly changed. The mood of exaltation induced by the sermon, the sense of doubts and anxieties dispelled – these were forgotten; as the bowls went round, men whose very faces had been serene and gentle a moment before resumed their usual expression of cunning. Each man wondered whether so – and – so had put more in the bowl than he himself, whether he himself had given more than he need have done; noticing how cleverly so – and – so slipped the bowl to his neighbor without putting anything in it at all ... a sudden flash of materialism, like a spark from a smoldering fire (p. 70).

In the Butsuoji temple, not only the parishioners that underestimate their religious observances but also one of the member of the priest family. Some of the religious observances have not been seriously conducted. Another example of it is the

⁴ A kind of dry cake (p. 69).

scripture reading that Mineyo conducts every morning. For Mineyo, reading the scripture written by Shinran is merely a duty that she needs to fulfill. Yet, she never bothers to know what the meaning of the scripture itself is.

Mineyo read fast. It had never occurred to her to ask what the words on the page meant, nor did she know that the Shoshin – nenbutsu – ge scripture, to give its full name, had been written by Shinran himself as the conclusion of the section on “Conduct” in his book, *Doctrine, Works, Faith, and Attainment*. For Mineyo, the morning and evening offerings and the scripture reading were merely a duty that had to be fulfilled as part of the inevitable routine of life in a temple (p. 33).

The people of the Butsuoji temple also seem to underestimate not only their sect’s teachings but also the establishment of Butsuoji temple in their town. Their respect toward the temple is decreasing. They only come to visit the temple when they faced problems in their lives or when there is funeral. People seem to forget that the function of the Butsuoji temple is not only to pray for the death.

People would come to the temple only when they had to, on special occasions. “Special occasions” meant mostly funerals, and the temple was felt to be of use only when somebody in one’s family died. Otherwise people forgot about it completely, as they forgot about death when it was not confronting them directly (p. 61).

Butsuoji temple has been regarded as an institution for holding funeral services. This is in contrast with Shinran’s concern. As the founder of the Pure Land sect, his concern is the attainment of true enlightenment and spiritual peace in this life, rather than with the problems of the death (p. 61).

To sum up, there are three major characters – Soshū, Mineyo, and Yamaji – in the novel and the anonymous parishioners of the Butsuoji temple as the minor characters. The story reveals that the Butsuoji temple begins to lose their parishioners’ respect and attention, the people of the Butsuoji seem to less care about their faith, and

that the True Pure Land sect rules have undergone some changes. From the first analysis we can also learn that in some ways the sect consider money is more important than their spiritual achievement.

In the first analysis, we have recognized the people of the Butsuoji temple and the situation in the True Pure Land sect. Next, we would see how those characters build up materialism in the changing True Pure Land sect.

B. How the Characters Convey Materialism in True Pure Land Sect

In the discussion, the writer reviews theories on materialism from three different perspectives namely from the Greek Philosophy era, the Later Classical and Medieval Periods, and the Marxist Theory. In this second analysis, Plato's and Aristotle's ideas that materialism is merely about physical substances of the world and Epicurus' and Lucretius' ideas of atheistical materialism of the Later Classical and Medieval Periods are not reflected in the story. As Edwards' perspective that materialism include worldly pleasure of bodily comforts seen in Soshu's life, from the second analysis we can see that the novel reflects materialism according to the Marxist theory, where the moral, religious, and philosophical ideas of the True Pure Land sect change due to the characters' tendencies in fulfilling their material need, which in this case is money. Here we would see the contribution of the major and minor characters in the novel in the existence of materialism in the True Pure Land sect.

B.1. The Contribution of the Major Characters

B.1.1 The Contribution of Mosuke Yamaji

The establishment of the Butsuoji temple depends on the parishioners of the Tan'ami. Like any other temples, the Butsuoji temple needs some amount of money to

preserve the temple from extinction. The temple gets some money from their parishioners. The parishioners give some money as a contribution toward the temple, or as money offerings.

Soshu had just begun the six *Shoshinge* hymns...As soon as she heard him finish, the maid brought in tea, with an envelope containing the temple offering on a separate tray. Soshu drank his tea and before getting up to go he put out the candles, leaving only the altar lamp burning (p. 114).

The temple earns some money offerings from door-to-door service. From the quotation above, we know that Soshu reads some sutras in one of his parishioners' house. Usually the host would join him and sit behind him listening to the sutras he reads. Nevertheless, sometimes no one would join him. He would find the house empty. It can be understood since most of the Butsuoji parishioners are farmers who work in their field most of the day. In a situation like that, the host would leave the money offerings for Soshu to take.

The offering had been left on the altar by the flower vase, for Soshu to take. The Izutas had expected Soshu would come while they were at work in the fields; and for them work was a greater necessity than being present for the sutras. They had gone to the fields that morning comforted by the knowledge that the priest from Butsuoji would come and read the sutras before the family shrine while they were away (p. 136)

The Butsuoji temple would also earn some amount of money from the sermons that are usually held at the temple. In a sermon, some collection bowls would be passed on from one parishioner to another and the parishioners would put some money in the collection bowls (p. 70). Actually the temple has a rule concerning the money contributions. The parishioners give money contributions according to the elders' policy. The elders decide that the money contributions the parishioners have to give to

the temple go by the amount of local tax each household pays (p. 264).

The money contributions are used for some occasions in the Butsuoji temple. One of the occasions is the last autumn service in the memory of St. Shinran. The service would be held in the temple and usually in an occasion like this, the women of Tan'ami would serve some meal for the people who would attend the service. The money contributions would be used to cover the expenses of the meal.

All the other expenses of the meal were taken from the money offerings the parishioners had made for the services. A week before the services began the elders, each taking a part of the town, visited every family that belonged to Butsuoji, urging them to attend, and collecting contributions from those who would be unable to do so (p. 65).

The money contributions are also used to pay the priests who give sermons or services to the parishioners. It can be seen from the quotation below:

The sermons were not free after all. The preacher was paid according to the amount collected before and during the services. A famous preacher received more than one who was unknown. Many more people would come to hear him – the hall would be filled to overflowing, so it was obvious that the collection would be substantial (P. 70).

According to the quotation above, the priest who gives the sermons to the parishioners would get paid. The payment is taken from the money collected by the parishioners before and during the sermon. Payment for each priest or preacher is different. The payment given depends on the priest's popularity among the parishioners. A popular preacher would receive more money than those who are less popular.

Some new sects have established their branches in the town of Tan'ami. One of them is the Nichiren sect. Money contributions would be useful for a new sect like the Nichiren sect. They would need some fund to establish branches, such as in Tan'ami (p.

214). In this work, the priests of the Nichiren sect have visited Yamaji for some fund to enlarge their temple.

“He’s already decided to change, then?”

“The Nichiren priest keeps visiting him, I believe. It’s all out of spite towards you. He’s agreed to give them a big donation, to help towards enlarging their temple; but I don’t think he’s actually decided to join” (p. 282)

Another way to use the money offerings or contributions is to start some kind of activity in the temple, for example to open a day nursery, a kindergarten, or a Sunday school for the parishioners’ children. It would be beneficial for the parishioners because most of them are farmers who work all day and do not have time or someone to watch for their children. Yet, the Butsuoji temple is not able to start such programs because they don’t have the money to start with.

“What about starting a kindergarten?”

“I’ve thought of that – or a day nursery perhaps.”

“So many of the parishioners are farmers, it would be mean a lot to them to have someone take their children off their hands for a few hours when they’re busy in the fields.”

“We used to hold a Sunday School, but had to stop for lack of funds” (p. 312 – 313).

The Butsuoji temple is endangered by the establishment of some new sects in Tan’ami, in this case is the Nichiren sect. The Nichiren sect is popular and it attracts new converts with their teaching. Since there is a rule in obtaining new parishioners in the Butsuoji temple, in which they are not allowed to canvass for new parishioners, the Butsuoji temple cannot take any further action about it.

Two or three new sects had established branches in Tan’ami. Buddhist priests could hardly be indifferent when these sects, which made much of worldly benefits in their teaching, began to attract converts; but they pretended to be unaware of what was going on out of a feeling that any attempt to compete for members would be unseemly. Butsuoji was no more immune than other temples to the

danger represented by the new doctrines, and little could be done to prevent parishioners from succumbing to their lure (p. 214)

The Nichiren sect starts to lay their eyes on Mosuke Yamaji. The new sect knows that Yamaji can help them in establishing their new branch in Tan'ami. The Nichiren priests try to make Yamaji to join the new sect.

“A Nichiren priest has been visiting Yamaji’s house lately.”
Soshu was shocked; he had not known this.

“The Nichiren people are on to a good thing nowadays, with their talk about getting rich by prayer and all the rest of it. They’ve been trying for some time to get hold of Yamaji (p. 264-265).

The Butsuoji temple cannot canvass for new parishioners, and this is one of the rules in obtaining new converts agreed by the temples belonged to the True Pure Land sect. This rule complicates the Butsuoji temple to compete with the new sects that have been starting to establish their branches in Tan'ami in gaining new members. Aside from the difficulty that Butsuoji has to deal with in gaining new parishioners – due to the rules – the temple has another problem. The Butsuoji temple owns very little property. Yamaji is concern about the Butsuoji temple financial status. This situation creates wider gap between Butsuoji and the new sect in the competition.

“I am the official representative of Butsuoji congregation, for the time being, anyway, and since I was appointed I’ve never allowed myself to forget the duty this lays upon me. I’ve been concerned for a long time now that Butsuoji owns so little in the way of property. What property, after all, does our temple possess that’s worth the name?” Yamaji was saying. (p. 256).

Yamaji suggests that they should sell some of the land that belonged to Butsuoji. The problem is the Butsuoji temple only possesses a small area that is already used for the cemetery. Yet, the area that Yamaji referred to is the cemetery land. He wants the Butsuoji temple to own something.

In revealing his idea, Yamaji realizes that he has power over the people of the Butsuoji. He is so confident that the others would agree to his suggestion because he is wealthy and one of the important men in the temple.

There was an undertone of conscious power in his manner, which even those sitting in the back could catch, though he did not raise his voice. Men change, it seems, according to the environment life brings them. Everything about him was different now, down to the color of the class he now belonged to, the comfort in which he lived (p. 256).

Yamaji suggests that they must sell the cemetery land, the only area that the temple has (p. 256). Yamaji considers that the Butsuoji temple would get positive result. By selling the cemetery land, the Butsuoji temple would earn some amount of money. Yamaji thinks that with a better financial condition, the parishioners would learn sooner or later that the temple has something, and the Butsuoji temple would be well liked once again.

We won't be popular at first, but as time goes on it'll be obvious to everybody how much the temple has benefited. If you will take the initiative and say the cemetery land must be sold, that's half the battle won already; and my support will help (p. 219).

Yamaji tries to urge Soshu to sell the only terrain, used for the cemetery, that their temple has. The money would be beneficial for the Butsuoji temple to gain new converts and to get their popularity back.

Previously it has been mentioned that financially the Butsuoji temple is weak. In order to manage its establishment in the society, the temple needs some amount of money, which can only be obtain from their parishioners. With the establishment of new sects in Tan'ami such as the popular Nichiren, the Butsuoji is having difficulty in gaining new members. Yet, due to the rules of the True Pure Land sect they cannot

canvass for new members. Then the only way to get more money and to get their popularity back, according to Yamaji, is by selling the cemetery land. From Yamaji's thought we can see that Marx's ideas that the economic situation of a society – which in this case is the Butsuoji temple – influences their religious and philosophical ideas. Yamaji ideas of the holiness of the temple change. He thinks that the cemetery land is unimportant for the parishioners, he thinks that popularity is more important, and that the popularity of their temple can be obtained by having some properties. What matters to Yamaji the most is money.

However, Soshu thinks that selling the cemetery land is not a wise decision to make. Soshu knows that selling the cemetery would infuriate the parishioners because the cemetery is important for them. The parishioners believe that their ancestors' spirit are sleeping there, and no one should disturb them (p. 219). Yamaji realizes that he is one of the most influential persons in the Butsuoji temple. He realizes that his position is important. The people of the Butsuoji temple need him because he is wealthy enough to support the temple financially.

“If this business doesn't go smoothly, I'm quite prepared to give up my connection with Butsuoji altogether – which would set them thinking alright: it would be next to impossible to run the temple without me. I've got a grip on Butsuoji just where it's weakest, you see. For all the authority he has, the priest might just as well not be there at all. If I wanted to, I could make him starve. No, I won't allow anyone to upset my plan...” (p. 212)

Yamaji threatens the Butsuoji congregation that he would leave the temple if they do not support his plan in selling the cemetery land. He dares to threaten the people of the Butsuoji because he knows that Butsuoji temple depends on him financially, and the Butsuoji temple is defenseless financially. Yamaji realizes that he has important position

in the temple, he has the power and the money needed by the temple. He thinks with the power and the money that he has, he can dictate others what to do.

B.1.2 The Contribution of Mineyo Getsudo

Money contributions can be earned not only from the wealthy parishioners but also from the preachers.

“You’ll have to be firm with Mrs. Kushimoto – tell her straight out that she’s not to come to the temple any more!”

“Perhaps we’d better ask somebody else to take the services next time.”

“No, that would be stupid – it’s because of him the collections are so big. We can’t sacrifice him for the sake of the widow. The only thing is to speak to her – and if you won’t, I will” (p. 73).

Mineyo asks Soshu to tell Mrs. Kushimoto to give up her connection with Butsuoji because she has an affair with the famous preacher and that is embarrassing for the temple reputation. For Mineyo, to keep the preacher is much more important because to have a famous preacher to lead a sermon would be an advantage for Butsuoji temple. More parishioners would come to join the sermon and with more parishioners the Butsuoji temple would get more money contributions. Thus, a famous preacher is as important as wealthy parishioners for Butsuoji.

Marx’s ideas that economic situation of a society would influence their moral ideas can be seen from the quotation and information above. The Butsuoji temple and also the Nichiren think that it is legal for them to exploit wealthy person like Yamaji for the benefit of their temple. The temple also being unfair to the other parishioners because the temple treats wealthy people exclusively just because they need the money. Further, as a member of the Butsuoji temple, Mineyo considers that keeping a popular

priest is more important to the temple's sake than keeping a parishioner like Mrs. Komiyama. Mineyo thinks that way because she knows that the temple would get more money if popular preachers lead their sermons. To put it in other words, for Mineyo, money is more important, and the temple's desperate need of money has changed her moral attitudes toward others.

B.1.3 Soshu Getsudo

In this discussion, the writer mentions three different theories on materialism, and that Marx's idea of materialism is reflected in the story. Regardless of that matter, Edwards' idea on materialism is reflected in the character of Soshu. Apparently, money is not the only problem that the Butsuoji temple has. What Soshu deals with is his lust, which is suitable to Edwards' idea that materialism also includes a preoccupation with worldly pleasure of bodily comforts.

“Mrs. Komiyama, is it?”

Soshu nodded.

“She's very thoughtless, I must say. Nobody expects the priest to go visiting during the festival.”

“I'll come back if it turns to be inconvenient.”

“Shoju might just as well take your place today. You're too conscientious, Father!”

Again the shame...the monthly service was the merest pretext, an excuse to see her, hear her voice he was starved of, meeting her only once in a whole month (p. 233).

Soshu insists in giving a door-to-door service in Mrs. Komiyama's house even it is unnecessary for him to give services during festivals or he could send Shoju to replace him. Soshu still wants to go there because he has a special feeling for Mrs. Komiyama. From the quotation above, we can see that Soshu only uses the door-to-door service as an excuse to see her. Although as a priest of the True Pure Land sect Soshu is able to marry but he has been unfaithful to his wife, Renko, by having secret

relationship with Mrs. Komiyama.

Another forbidden lust also embellishes Soshu's life. Despite his secret relationship with Mrs. Komiyama, Soshu is also involved with Mineyo, his own mother-in-law. Soshu cannot fight his own sexual drive. His secret intimacy with Mineyo has been going on since he was a college student, far before he marries her daughter, Renko to Soshu.

Silently the door slid back. Scent filled the room; behind it, provocative through the darkness, a figure moved across the mats towards him. Not knowing how to get rid of her, Soshu pretended to be asleep; but once she lay down beside him he could resist no longer. He had always been like that, surrendering instantly to her stronger will, ever since she had first known him as a student (p. 41).

B.2. The Contribution of the Minor Characters

In the story, the Butsuoji temple and the True Pure Land sect itself, as an organization, seem to value funds as a very crucial matter for them. It can be seen from the Honzan elections, especially in the requirements that the candidates of the True Pure Land sect council have to follow.

Any priest of over twenty-five who has spent a year or more in a designated temple is eligible for nomination – with the exception of “persons physically or mentally incapable, bankrupts, persons undergoing terms of imprisonment, under probation or having been under probation within a period of one year prior to the election, and persons in arrear with contributions to the central temple”; such people also being deprived of the right to vote (p. 169–170).

The True Pure Land sect concerns about their candidates' financial status, regardless to the other requirements needed in the Honzan elections. From the quotation above, we can learn that a religious organization like the True Pure Land sect seem to concern more on the financial problems of their congregation than their religious life or their

religious achievement. The Nichiren sect also faces the same thing. The priests of the Nichiren sect have been trying to get hold on Yamaji.

The Kashimura family has always provided the senior representative, but that's only tradition – they don't give much to Butsuoji. Empty status, that's all. It's natural the Nichiren priests should have their eyes on Mr. Yamaji. They'll be building a big new temple with his money one of these days - and we shall be looking on sucking our thumbs... (p. 266).

From the quotation above we can learn that for modern Japanese Buddhist sects like the True Pure Land sect and the Nichiren, that to have a good name in the society does not mean anything without money and that it is natural to exploit a wealthy parishioner like Mosuke Yamaji in order to expand their branches or their temples.

As the consequence of considering money important, wealthy people or parishioners are also considered as important as money for a temple like Butsuoji. From wealthy people, Butsuoji could earn bigger money contributions. Most of the parishioners of the Butsuoji temple in Tan'ami are farmers. Many of the farmers – especially those who live in the Niizu-cho⁵ section are quite well-to-do, and therefore they are important to Butsuoji (p. 162)

The Butsuoji temple's need of money creates dependency toward wealthy people such as Mosuke Yamaji. Mosuke Yamaji has been giving big contributions to the temple. The Butsuoji temple needs him badly and therefore to offend him is unthinkable since the money offerings he gives to the temple are higher than those of all the rest of the congregation put together (p. 220). The people of Butsuoji are afraid if they displease Yamaji, he would leave the temple.

⁵ Niizu-cho is a section or a small district of a town in Japan (p.61).

“If that’s how you all feel, I shall have nothing more to do with Butsuoji from now on”. A hush fell over the hall, Soshu was stupefied. Those last words of Yamaji were what he had feared. He felt crushed, more bitterly aware than ever before of his own helplessness. A priest, charged with the spiritual care of his parishioners – one confrontation with material reality, and his priesthood was as nothing (p. 260).

Previously, it has been mentioned that Mosuke Yamaji had a plan to sell the cemetery land belonged to Butsuoji but the parishioners objected. The cemetery means a lot to them. Yamaji once threaten the congregation to give up his connection with Butsuoji if his plan did not go well. Now, he decides to leave Butsuoji. The last thing that Soshu wants to hear is Yamaji’s decision to give up his membership with the Butsuoji temple because Soshu realizes that it would affect the whole congregation. To Soshu, Yamaji’s leaving means expiration for Butsuoji. Here, we can learn that Butsuoji’s concern for money creates dependency toward wealthy people.

The Butsuoji concern for money makes them have to treat the wealthy parishioners better than the other parishioners who give less money contributions. In general meetings at the temple, wealthy parishioners such as Mosuke Yamaji as parishioners who come from well-known families get special place to sit.

At general meetings, by long custom, the parishioners sat in a fixed order. It always happened that the wealthiest supporters of the temple, including, of course, Mosuke Yamaji, sat at the top, in an order, which seemed to depend on the amount of local tax each paid. Yosuke Tachi invariably sat at the bottom, as the one who made the smallest money contribution to Butsuoji (p. 56).

Parishioners who give small money contributions to the Butsuoji temple sit at the bottom. Once more, Marx’s idea of changing morality in a society is reflected in the story. It can be seen from the people of the temple’s attitude toward wealthy persons like Mosuke Yamaji. The people treat wealthy persons like Yamaji with respect and



they give higher seats for Yamaji in general meetings because they are afraid of Yamaji. They are afraid that Yamaji would give up his connection with the Butsuoji temple. The people of the temple do not treat others – the parishioners with less money contribution - the same way.

The seating order is a custom in Butsuoji and not only in the Butsuoji temple that money determines one's seat. In the True Pure Land sect in which Butsuoji belonged to, money also verifies a temple's rank status.

The color of the priest's robes varies according to the rank of his temple, which also determines where he sit when the priests meet in general assembly or in a memorial service for St. Shinran, in order to emphasize the dignity and solemnity of the occasion. Priests classified into nine ranks; all wear robes of coarse silk, but colored according to rank. For all these robes the parishioners pay. In effect, the rank itself depends on how much money the parishioners contribute to the central temple (p. 170–171).

The rank of a temple belonged to the True Pure Land sect can be seen from the color of the priest's robes of a temple. The color of a priest's robes later on determines where he sits in the general assembly or in a service. The seating arrangement is set to stress the formality and the solemnity of the service. Once again money influences the sect, particularly the temple's status. To make it clearer, the amount of the money contributions a temple earned would be used to buy their priest's robes and what their priest's wears would affect their temple's rank. The more money the parishioners give to their temple, the more money their priest would have and the more cash a temple has, the better robes their priest could afford. Last but not least, the better robes their priest could afford, the higher rank his temple would get. Here, Marx's idea that money influences the political idea of a society is reflected. In the True Pure Land sect's

organization, the rank of a temple belonged to the sect is determined by how much money contribution the temple gives to the sect.

Some of the Butsuoji parishioners neglect their spiritual life. In the teaching of Shinran, in order to gain salvation one must call on Amida's holy name with one whole soul (p.53). However, some of the parishioners think that they can buy salvation by giving more money to the temple.

“That’s Mrs. Komiyama you’re talking about?”

“What does she do?”

“Nothing...”

“How much does she give to the temple?”

“A lot – you’d be surprised how much. She’s one of the exceptions – most people in town don’t take much interest in the temple nowadays. Salvation really means something to her”(p. 164).

From the quotation above, referring to Marx’s argument on historical materialism, we can see that the parishioners’ idea toward their religious life changes. The parishioners do not care about their spiritual life anymore. They underestimate their relation with Amida Buddha by thinking that they can get salvation with money.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

There are three major characters described in the story – Soshu Getsudo, Mineyo Getsudo, and Mosuke Yamaji – and the anonymous parishioners as the minor characters who contribute the existence of materialism in the Butsuoji temple of the True Pure Land sect.

The True Pure Land sect described in *The Buddha Tree* has some branches and each branch supervises some temples. One of the temples is the Butsuoji, located in the outlying part of Tan'ami. The Butsuoji temple functions as a place for the parishioners of the Butsuoji to worship to Amida Buddha, affirming Schaefer's statement that the affiliation of a sect is based on conscious acceptance of a specific dogma.

The sect has some religious rules and they have undergone some changes; the priests are permitted to marry, to eat meat and to drink and the quality of the offerings for Amida and Shinran becomes less important. In this story, a religious organization like the True Pure Land sect described as to have a tendency to value material things too much, and it makes them to neglect their congregation spiritual need.

Marx's ideas on materialism - that man's tendency in fulfilling his material needs due to the economic situation of the society influences the political, legal, moral, religious and philosophical ideas of the society itself - is reflected in the sect described in the story. In the True Pure Land sect described in *The Buddha Tree*, materialism is conveyed in some aspects.

Materialism in the Butsuoji temple is reflected in the character of Mosuke Yamaji who adores popularity and money. Yamaji thinks that popularity or reputation is

important for the temple. The Butsuoji temple feels endangered with the establishment of new sects in Tan'ami. The temple is anxious to lose their parishioners, and in order to keep them and to convert more, Yamaji tries to build up their popularity by selling their land to have property and money.

Mineyo Getsudo creates materialistic atmosphere in the sect also. She prefers to lose a member of the temple than to lose popular preachers because she knows those popular preachers can be a good source of money for the temple.

Materialism includes tendency in valuing bodily comforts, Soshu's affairs with Mineyo and with Mrs. Komiyama also reflect materialism in the Butsuoji temple of the True Pure Land sect. As a husband and moreover as a priest, he cannot control his sexual drive toward one of his parishioners, Mrs. Komiyama, and toward his own mother-in-law.

Materialism also reflected in the minor characters, which are the parishioners. Some of the Butsuoji parishioners' attitude toward the sect's teaching, in this case toward salvation has changed. Some of the parishioners begin to neglect their spiritual way to gain salvation – to call on Amida with one's whole soul – instead, they think that money can buy salvation.

Materialism in the body of the True Pure Land sect can be seen from the Honzan elections. The sect clearly put their interest more on their priests' financial status rather than their priests' religious achievement or their morality as candidates of the council for the central temple. Another example of materialism in the True Pure Land sect is the verification of a temple's rank or status among the other temples belonged to the sect over money. In the True Pure Land sect, a temple's rank is determined by how much

amount of money the temple gives to the central temple of the sect. Money also determines where a priest of a temple should sit at general assembly. At the Butsuoji temple of the True Pure Land sect, money determines where a parishioner should sit when attending general meetings. A wealthy man like Mosuke Yamaji sits at the top because he contributes a lot of money to the Butsuoji temple, and a parishioner like Yosuke Tachi who gives the smallest amount of money to the temple sits at the bottom.

Materialism deals with worldly affairs, nevertheless in the story, materialism is focused on the sect's tendency to value money more than their spiritual needs, aside from Soshu's forbidden lust toward Mineyo and Mrs. Komiyama. Ultimately, materialism changes the life of the sect. Similar with Marx's ideas on materialism, the sect's tendency in fulfilling material needs influences the sect's guiding principles, its organization regulations which reflected in the Honzan elections, and the people mind-set toward their spiritual life.

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APPENDIX I

Summary of the Story

The Butsuoji temple belonged to the Takada branch of the True Pure Land sect is located in a small town in Japan called Tan'ami. The Butsuoji temple focuses their teaching in the doctrine taught by Shinran, which is on Amida Buddha. In the Butsuoji temple lives the Getsudo family. The Getsudo family is the priest of the Butsuoji temple family. The family consists of five persons. The priest's name is Soshu. He is thirty-eight years old. Soshu is married to a girl named Renko. Renko is nine years younger than Soshu. They have an eight year old son named Ryokun. Renko's mother, Mineyo, lives with them. She is fifty-three. The last member of the family is Shoju. Shoju is also a priest but he is a little bit retarded. He is a handyman there and he helps Soshu with the temple religious observances. The Getsudos has a maid, named O-Sugi.

Soshu has an affair with Mineyo, and it has been going since Soshu was still a college student, before he is married to Renko. Knowing that his husband has an affair with her mother, one day Renko left the temple and she married to a Kabuki actor. Later on, they have two lovely children and live happily. Ryokun does not know anything about it and he still lives with his father in the temple.

The Butsuoji temple is dealing with some problems. The temple does not own much, financially, and its popularity is declining. Some new sect, one of them is the Nichiren sect, begin to establish their branches in Tan'ami. This situation endangers Butsuoji. The Butsuoji is anxious of losing their parishioners. In order to survive and to gain their popularity back, the temple needs to earn some amount of money.

The temple technically earns some money from the parishioners in the form of

money offerings and money contributions. The money offerings are given to the temple due to the religious services that Soshu gives to the parishioners. The money contributions are given due to some other religious occasions. The temple uses the money to hold services, religious festivals or ceremonies, and to pay for some priests who conduct some sermons.

Mosuke Yamaji is the Butsuoji temple's biggest donator. Mosuke Yamaji is a stock-jobber, and he owns a company. He is basically a wealthy man. He gives big amount of money to Butsuoji. It makes the temple depends on him financially so much. Therefore, they really respect him. Yamaji has a mistress. Her name is Mrs. Tomoko Komiyama. Later on, Soshu falls in love with Tomoko and she feels the same way about him too. Nevertheless, they must hide their feelings for each other because they are afraid that Yamaji finds out about it.

The Butsuoji temple faces a bigger problem when Yamaji finally decide to give up his connection to Butsuoji and join the Nichiren sect. Yamaji's leaving means extinction for Butsuoji because for all this time the temple depends on Yamaji. Yamaji decides to leave the Butsuoji temple because the people of Butsuoji reject his plan in selling the cemetery land to get Butsuoji some money. If Yamaji left then Butsuoji would have nothing and perhaps they have to force themselves to close the temple.

In the end, Soshu gives up his title as the Butsuoji's priest. He feels ashamed about himself. He knows he has failed as a priest and his parishioners have found for sometimes about his affair with Mineyo. Before he leaves the temple, he leaves Mineyo and Ryokun to the people of Butsuoji. He begs the people to have them live there. Soshu himself leaves Tan'ami for Kashiwazaki to see one of his priest friends.

APPENDIX II



Biography of the Author

Fumio Niwa (1904-1978) was the author of more than 80 novels, 106 volumes of short stories, and ten volumes of essays. Fumio Niwa was a son of a Buddhist priest. As the heir of a family of priest, he was ordained during childhood. He left the priesthood in 1931 after finishing college. A graduate of Waseda University with a degree in literature, Fumio Niwa was the winner of every major Japanese literary prize and served as the long-time chief director of the Japanese Writer's Association. In 1956, Niwa was elected as a member of the Art Academy in Japan. Aside from *The Buddha Tree* (1966) or also entitled *Bodaiju* in Japanese, some of his other works are *Rennyō* (1945), *Hebi To Hato* (1953), and *The Hateful Age* (1952) (Niwa, 2000: i).