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**Ives/Imperial-Way Zen**

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## INTRODUCTION

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Preaching a gospel of non-violence, the Dalai Lama has presented Buddhism to his wide audience as a religion of peace. Jack Kerouac and other Beat writers imagined an East Asian Zen populated by poets, hermits, and eccentrics, defiantly extricated from conventional morality and political co-optation. While these representations may hold sway in the popular imagination, history presents a different Buddhism. During the first half of the twentieth century, for example, Zen Buddhist leaders contributed actively to Japanese imperialism, giving rise to what has been termed “Imperial-Way Zen” (*kōdō Zen*), one variety of broader “Imperial-Way Buddhism” (*kōdō Bukkyō*).

This historical record prompts a number of questions. How could Zen, a religion ostensibly committed to non-violence, the cultivation of wisdom and compassion, and the vow to liberate all sentient beings, have collaborated with Japanese imperialism, with all of its parochial nationalism<sup>1</sup> and destructive militarism? To what extent have postwar Zen leaders reflected on recent history and perhaps even apologized for their war responsibility? Have they made efforts to reform their tradition and thereby avoid being doomed to repeat mistakes? Might such core Buddhist moral values as non-violence and compassion have moderated that wartime collaboration and now provide resources with which Japanese Zen thinkers can construct a critical social ethic? This book in part seeks to answer these questions.

Most scholars who have investigated the connections between religion and Japanese imperialism from the Meiji Restoration (1868) up through the Fifteen-Year War (1931–1945) have focused on Shinto, the Japanese religious tradition most integrated into and implicated in modern Japanese imperialism.<sup>2</sup> Buddhism, however, has attracted its share of scrutiny as well. A small but growing number

of Japanese scholars have written on Imperial-Way Buddhism.<sup>3</sup> Several writers in English have sketched Buddhist nationalism during the Meiji period (1868–1912),<sup>4</sup> collaboration with later governmental attempts to control new religious movements,<sup>5</sup> and contributions to Japanese imperialism from the Meiji up through the Taishō (1912–1926) and early-Shōwa (1926–1945) periods.<sup>6</sup>

The foremost scholar of Imperial-Way Zen is priest, professor, and activist Ichikawa Hakugen (1902–1986). From the end of the war until his death he chronicled Zen support for Japanese imperialism and pressed the issue of Buddhist war responsibility. And he did so almost single-handedly, living as he did in a climate that was long on celebration of postwar democracy and peace but short on analysis of wartime militarism and belligerence. In his critique Ichikawa advanced arguments about the Zen approach to religious liberation and society, political ramifications of Buddhist metaphysical and logical constructs, traditional relations between Buddhism and governments in East Asia, tensions between Buddhist and Marxist thought in Japan, the philosophical system of Nishida Kitarō (1876–1945), and the vestiges of State Shinto in postwar Japan. Greatly influenced by Ichikawa, Brian Daizen Victoria has recently detailed in English the actions and ideology of the most active Zen supporters of Japanese imperialism, and his writings have prodded Rinzai Zen leaders to begin reflecting on and apologizing for their tradition's wartime actions.

Despite the importance of Ichikawa's writings, no scholar in Japanese or any other language has outlined Ichikawa's critique. I have written this book to begin filling that void, while offering my own reflections on Zen ethics in light of the historical phenomenon of Imperial-Way Zen.

After devoting the first chapter to an overview of the actions and ideology that characterized Imperial-Way Buddhism from the Meiji Restoration up through 1945, I turn to Ichikawa. In chapter two I sketch his arguments about the facets of the Zen religious path that contributed to Imperial-Way Zen. As we will see, he claims that the “peace of mind” (*anjin*) central to Zen liberation—cultivated by extricating oneself from discriminating thought, “becoming one with things” (*narikiru*), making one's mind like a mirror that reflects all things “just as they are,” and “accepting and according with circumstances” (*nin'nun*)—undermines criticism of and resistance to sociopolitical actuality, and largely because of this mindset Zen Buddhists have accommodated if not actively supported the status quo. Ichikawa argues that this tendency was exacerbated by the “logic of *sokushi*” and certain interpretations of Huayan (J. Kegon) Buddhist metaphysics, which obfuscated distinctions between the “is” and the “ought” and led Buddhist leaders and philosophers like Nishida to valorize actuality and certain particulars therein, whether the emperor or the imperial household. Ichikawa also called into question Zen views of society and

history, and in chapter three I explore his arguments about how such constructs as karma, “differences are none other than equality” (*shabetsu-soku-byōdō*), indebtedness (*on*), and harmony (*wa*) have shaped Zen’s conservative social stance.

From there I shift to evaluating Brian Victoria’s claim that Imperial-Way Zen was caused by the Zen connection to the samurai, swordsmanship, and the warrior ethos (*bushidō*). In the remainder of chapter four I set forth an argument of my own that overlaps with yet diverges from the explanations put forth by Ichikawa and Victoria. Noting how Zen leaders and institutions historically have promoted their interests through symbiosis with ruling powers, I argue that Imperial-Way Zen can best be understood as a modern instance of this “Buddhism for the protection of the realm” (*gokoku Bukkyō*).

In chapter five I sketch Ichikawa’s analysis of issues that lingered after 1945 and investigate whether postwar Zen thinkers have reflected on their wartime political stances and on that basis expressed contrition, accepted responsibility, and criticized postwar vestiges of, for example, State Shinto, the imperial ideology, and imperialism. I sketch in chapter six the arguments that Rinzai Zen leaders and Ichikawa have made about how to avoid repeating their wartime mistakes, reform Zen, and start constructing a critical Zen social ethic. And to address the question of whether elements in Buddhist ethics may have moderated Buddhist nationalism, in chapter seven I examine the first precept, compassion, negation, and monastic values and argue that these possible checks do not necessarily provide an internal mechanism for criticizing the kind of ideology and nationalism displayed by Imperial-Way Zen during the war. In that chapter I also offer reflections on the resources Zen might offer its contemporary leaders as they pursue what they themselves have identified as a pressing task: ensuring that Zen will now promote peace and human rights and not be co-opted in the future. In that regard I consider how Zen might avoid political naiveté and acquiescence, overcome institutional embeddedness, and craft a prophetic voice, or at least a form of ideology critique.

In exploring these issues, my intention is not to paint Zen with the brush of “fascism”; to judge Buddhist figures for not fighting back at a time of oppressive state control of education, political speech, and religious expression; or, in focusing on Japan, to divert attention away from similar instances of religious support for coercive nationalism and destructive military escapades. I am not looking at Imperial-Way Zen with the “Allied gaze” that David Williams polemically attributes to Western scholars who raise questions about wartime Japanese thinkers.<sup>7</sup> My “gaze” on the issues surrounding Imperial-Way Zen derives from a broader interest in religion, ideology, nationalism, and imperialism, and I recognize that no scholarly writing, no interpretive angle or hermeneutical position, is free from bias. And though I focus on events that took place in East Asia more than sixty

years ago, an analogous critique can be directed at contemporary alliances between religion, ideology, and violence, whether terrorist or imperialist in nature.

Ichikawa was born in 1902, the thirty-fifth year of the Meiji period, in Gifu Prefecture north of Nagoya. His father was the resident priest of Kezōji, a small temple affiliated with Myōshinji.<sup>8</sup> His mother, Ichikawa once wrote, “was born in a family of declining ex-landlords in Owari [in what is now Aichi Prefecture], and she was a decisive, self-assured woman.”<sup>9</sup> Ichikawa had one sibling, a younger sister.

Each autumn a group of young men from Ichikawa’s village would enter the military. On the day of their departure, Ichikawa would be taken with his classmates to join other villagers at the local shrine. Village leaders would give speeches in celebration of military service as a way to repay one’s debt to the emperor. The Shinto priest would read a prayer (*norito*) and wave a purificatory wand over the recruits, who, in turn, would drink a cup of sacred sake and offer obligatory comments. Their words, however, rang hollow to Ichikawa. Later in life he wrote, “I shall never forget the expression on the face of the eldest son of the family that lived next door on the west side of the temple when he made his parting speech. Even now, forty years later, his expression floats up before me in my mind.”<sup>10</sup> After the requisite oration, the conscripts would walk with their neighbors to the edge of the village, where the headman and other representatives would send them off with a few final remarks.

These field trips were not the only part of the late Meiji educational system that made a permanent mark on Ichikawa. Officials in the Ministry of Education had begun reworking government-approved textbooks, shifting from the earlier positivist ethos of “civilization and enlightenment” (*bunmei kaika*) to a valorization of imperialism and militarism.<sup>11</sup> Students only two or three years ahead of Ichikawa in school had sung songs about George Washington and read newspapers with articles about world events. By the time Ichikawa started elementary school the curriculum had changed: “From the second or third grade we were forced to march out onto the school playground with our palms pressed together before our chests, chanting in a large voice, ‘The imperial nation with its unbroken line of emperors . . .,’ as if these words were a *dhāraṇī*<sup>12</sup> or a coded telegram.”<sup>13</sup> Ichikawa and his classmates were directed to chant most vigorously on November 3, the Emperor’s Birthday (*tenchō-setsu*). As Ichikawa approached the end of elementary school his teachers repeated an admonition, apparently without irony, that made a lifelong impression on him: “Do not believe in superstitions.”<sup>14</sup>

The officials in Tokyo who created the prewar imperial educational system augmented their ideological efforts by mandating military training in the schools. “What I disliked most,” Ichikawa later reflected, “was the horizontal bar in physical education class and the ‘military-style exercises’ with a wooden rifle that were

required in fifth and sixth grade. I entered adolescence depressed. The rules and discipline of the military were terrifying, and more than anything I feared dying.”<sup>15</sup> Confronting this militarization of his life, he could not separate the emperor from the supreme command to sacrifice oneself for the public at a time of crisis. “To me, a person of distinct cowardice, the emperor, soldiers, and death were a trinity. The three great national holidays, which reinforced my feelings about this trinity, were deadly solemn, like New Year’s and a funeral rolled together.”<sup>16</sup>

Ichikawa construed his “cowardice” and reactions to the emperor as physiological, as a manifestation of a frail and timid constitution that made him antiwar and anti-*kokutai*<sup>17</sup> by nature. As such a person he feared conscription, though when he came of age he was declared unfit for military service. He also feared the state and the commander-in-chief who could order death. In school, such lessons as “The old soldier Kiguchi held on to his bugle even in death” made no impression on him, for he felt no empathy toward heroes; but when he later heard it was rigor mortis that kept Kiguchi clutching the bugle, Ichikawa came to feel sympathy for him.<sup>18</sup>

While a student at Tōnō Middle School,<sup>19</sup> Ichikawa’s antiwar and anti-*kokutai* nature was shaped further by a “positivist” history teacher and by his reading Natsume Soseki (1867–1916), Turgenev (1818–1883), and Dostoevski (1821–1881).<sup>20</sup> In his teenage years Ichikawa also came to recognize the gap between rich and poor in Japan. In particular he felt the misery of farming communities, and he started to embrace doubts about the flourishing of temples through the labor of ordinary people.<sup>21</sup> His growing sense of social inequality was deepened by his reading of Kawakami Hajime’s *A Tale of Poverty* (*Binbō monogatari*).<sup>22</sup>

After heading to Kyoto in 1920 to pursue Zen practice at the Myōshinji monastery, in April of 1923 Ichikawa matriculated at the affiliated Rinzaishū University, later renamed Hanazono University, at which he studied under Hisamatsu Shin’ichi,<sup>23</sup> Ogasawara Shūjitsu,<sup>24</sup> and other professors. In the years immediately following his graduation, Ichikawa worked in the university’s library and taught at Hanazono Middle School. He continued his studies of languages and Western thought<sup>25</sup> while also exploring the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō, which drew him to Zen. As he delved into Zen texts, he was impressed by a passage in Dōgen’s *Zuimonki*: “From the outset, there is neither good nor evil in the human mind. Good and evil arise according to circumstances. . . . Thus if you meet good circumstances, your mind will become good, and if you are involved in bad circumstances, your mind will become bad. Don’t think the mind is inherently bad. Just follow the good circumstances.”<sup>26</sup> About Ichikawa’s deepening interest in Zen, Nishimura Eshin has written, “In his renunciation (*shukke*), what he separated from was organizational Buddhism (*kyōdan Bukkyō*<sup>27</sup>), and after taking this step he resolved to re-enter the Zen path with full awareness of what he was doing.”<sup>28</sup> Though Ichikawa did not

engage in sustained Zen monastic practice, he reportedly did have some sort of religious experience while looking at a bee.<sup>29</sup>

In the 1920s Ichikawa started corresponding with the still unknown writer Miyazawa Kenji (1896–1933). Ichikawa's son Hiroshi<sup>30</sup> recalls seeing in their home a first-edition copy of Miyazawa's *Spring and Ashura* (*Haru to shura*), as well as a copy of *A Restaurant with Many Orders* (*Chūmon no ōi ryōriten*).<sup>31</sup> Ichikawa also read the poetry of Ishikawa Takuboku (1885–1912), essays by the anarchist Ōsugi Sakae,<sup>32</sup> Hugo's *Les Misérables*, Tolstoy's *What Then Must We Do?*, Mikhail Bakunin's *God and the State*, Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, Jack London's autobiography (with special interest in London's work as a laborer), and Kropotkin's *Appeal to Youth*, *Theory of Mutual Aid*, and *The Conquest of Bread*.<sup>33</sup> Through these readings a "humanistic anger toward the evils of society and the state" took root in Ichikawa,<sup>34</sup> which led him to study socialist thought in depth and fraternize with leftist activists.

This political orientation was not without risk. Because of his writings, Ichikawa had several brushes with the police. In the fall of 1929 he was questioned by officers at the Uzumasa police station in Kyoto for publishing under the pseudonym "Literary Weakling" (*bunjaku*) an antimilitarist piece, "A Logic that Stinks" ("Namasaki ronri"), in a small magazine back in Gifu.<sup>35</sup> This and several other essays also drew criticism from the head of the local veterans association and teachers in the Zen world. As a result, Ichikawa once declared, "The historical ominousness that enveloped the world of Zen struck home to me."<sup>36</sup> More than ostracism from the Zen world, however, what Ichikawa feared most about possible arrest was death from winter cold in jail.<sup>37</sup>

Ichikawa's leftist stance deepened as Japan marched to war. "In the mid-late 1930s," as he later recalled, "my social thought followed Kropotkin's lead, and my thinking about the war with China was heavily influenced by Hosokawa Karoku,<sup>38</sup> Miki Kiyoshi,<sup>39</sup> and Ozaki Hotsumi.<sup>40</sup> My orientation thus diverged from Sano Manabu and Akamatsu Katsumaro's 'One-Nation Socialism' under the emperor<sup>41</sup> and from the Japan-centered, world-historical view of war advanced by Nishida Kitarō and the Kyoto School of Philosophy."<sup>42</sup> Along this trajectory he at one point concluded that "if Buddhism is to possess social thought, it will have to take the form of B-A-C, Buddhism-Anarchism-Communism."<sup>43</sup> And as the Fifteen-Year War escalated in the 1930s, censored passages in the writings he was reading spoke to him of the suppression of leftist writers. After Kobayashi Takiji (1903–1933), the most prominent writer in the "proletarian literature movement," was tortured to death by the Tokyo police, Ichikawa's fear of state power gripped him even tighter.<sup>44</sup>

Reflecting his early experiences, Ichikawa later portrayed himself as moving in the 1920s and early 1930s through an immature period of trying to cultivate

himself, not an easy task insofar as his “vertical” interest in Zen and his “horizontal” social humanism lacked any “origin” (*genten*<sup>45</sup>) that could link the two dimensions.<sup>46</sup> He labeled himself “stunted,” and once commented, “The polar opposite of this stunted human being was the imperial education (*Kimigayo kyōiku*) and military life, the pinnacle of which was the emperor as supreme commander (*daigensui heika*). To me, the emperor was a symbol of death.”<sup>47</sup> Though in his youth Ichikawa had felt repulsion toward the trinity of mental, moral, and physical education in the imperial educational curriculum, he did not adequately grapple with his contradictory impulses to reject and to submit to this system. As Japan marched into war in the 1930s, with “stunted logicity” he stood as a unity on top of this contradiction.<sup>48</sup>

This unresolved tension even cropped up in his parenting. By the 1930s all public schools had a *kamidana*,<sup>49</sup> and in the interview component of middle-school entrance exams students were asked if their homes had one, too. Before his eldest son took the exam, Ichikawa purchased an especially large *kamidana* for his home. He dutifully followed government mandates and enshrined there a talisman (*taijima*) from the Ise Shrine. About this action he wrote, “In a person who rationalizes that it was only for his child’s success in the entrance examination that he worshipped at a *kamidana*, one cannot hope to find an upright, principled mind.”<sup>50</sup> At the same time, however, on another wall Ichikawa kept a map of Europe, on which he kept track of German defeats.<sup>51</sup>

During the war his circle of intellectual acquaintances included Ogasawara Shūjitsu, with whom he created a study group. Nishimura comments that Ichikawa, influenced by Ogasawara’s religious anarchism, “detested conservative, traditional Buddhist organizations while retaining belief in the revolutionary character of Zen.”<sup>52</sup> And though he was influenced by Marxist thought, “he was not someone who could be pigeonholed as a ‘red,’ for his concern was exposing the feudal ruling structure of Buddhist organizations (*kyōdan*) and liberating Zen from the spell of those organizations.”<sup>53</sup> With this agenda, he focused his early scholarship on Zen masters Dahui (J. Daie, 1089–1163), Bassui (1327–1387), Ikkyū (1394–1481), Takuan (1573–1645), and Bankei (1622–1693), all of whom had grappled with their historical situations.<sup>54</sup> Maintaining belief in the revolutionary potential of Zen, Ichikawa warned his general readers not to view Zen as a mere way of life or as something useful when practicing the paths of tea, painting, or the sword, and he admonished Zen priests to avoid representing Zen and Zen awakening (*satori*) as mysterious.<sup>55</sup>

At the height of Japanese imperialism and militarism, Ichikawa steered a course between collaboration and active resistance. In most of his wartime writings, as Ishii Kōsei has observed, he was abstract and vague, neither praising the

emperor or the war as much as other Buddhists did nor actively criticizing and resisting what was transpiring.<sup>56</sup> Nowhere, for example, in his short first book, *The Fundamental Character of Zen* (*Zen no kihonteki seikaku*), did Ichikawa sing the praises of nationalism,<sup>57</sup> and although this distinguished him from other Buddhist writers at that time, in the September 1942 installment of “War, Science, and Zen” (“*Sensō kagaku Zen*”), an essay he serialized in *The Great Wheel of Dharma* (*Daihōrin*), he suggested that the war was a holy war and argued that it was being fought by Japan to secure enduring peace in Asia.<sup>58</sup> Ishii has recently branded this essay a form of opportunism,<sup>59</sup> and if he were alive today Ichikawa would probably agree, for after 1945 he looked back on his wartime thought as lacking the tenacity and autonomy called for by the prolonged, high-stakes issues of that time: “Faced with questions of war and peace, both of which are momentous for the state, the populace, and humankind, I completely lacked the resolution necessary for thinking seriously about the issues and making grave decisions about courses of action.”<sup>60</sup> Specifically, he saw himself as failing to put up resistance (*teikō*) and instead hitting an impasse (*zasetu*) and committing ideological apostasy (*tenkō*).<sup>61</sup> He qualifies this self-portrayal by noting that, strictly speaking, “ideological apostasy” should be reserved for those who started out with clear, consistent, and publicly declared stances in opposition to the imperial system and Japanese fascism, as was the case with Senoō Girō (1889–1961), founder of the Alliance of New Buddhist Youth (Shinkō Bukkyō Seinen Dōmei).<sup>62</sup> Ichikawa also portrays wartime Buddhism as going through its impasse and apostasy at the end of the war, when its wartime ethic crumbled.<sup>63</sup> And in the case of the emperor, his main impasse was his issuance of the rescript ending the war, and his main apostasy was his declaration of humanity in January 1946.<sup>64</sup>

On the heels of Occupation reforms of the educational system, in April of 1949 Ichikawa became a professor at Hanazono University. He taught English and lectured on Zen history, socialist thought, and current events. Unlike D. T. Suzuki,<sup>65</sup> his criticism of Buddhists for their war responsibility did not begin until the Korean War (1950–1953), and Ishii attributes this delay to two developments from around 1950: “Japan started remilitarizing as the confrontation between democratic and communist states intensified, and officials started pushing a national morality close to its wartime counterpart.”<sup>66</sup> Ichikawa launched his criticism in the 1950 essay “On the Solitary Aloofness of Zen: Some Doubts about Zen” (“*Zen no kokōsei ni tsuite: Zen ni tai suru gigi*”). Later that year he helped found the Kyoto Religionists’ Consultation Group (Kyōto Shūkyōjin Kondankai). In August of 1951, in the midst of the Korean War, the group attempted to hold a “Citizens’ Evening of Peace,” but it was blocked by a directive from the office of General Charles Willoughby and the Prefectural Committee for Public Order.<sup>67</sup> In the face

of such government pressure, figures like Kainō Michitaka<sup>68</sup> stressed the need for peace movements and issued the call “Band together, cowards of ten-thousand nations!”<sup>69</sup> This appeal attracted Ichikawa, for from his youth the source of his energy had been “a coward’s realization of social solidarity.”<sup>70</sup> At that time Ichikawa also recognized that neither the character of Japan nor his timid character had changed much since 1945 and the problem of war responsibility was continuing inside him as the problem of his own way of living.<sup>71</sup>

In October of 1951 Ichikawa published “Concerning Zen Praxis” (“Zen no jissen ni tsuite”), and this article, together with his 1950 piece on Zen’s “solitary aloofness,” incurred the wrath of ecclesiastical officials in the Myōshinji branch of Rinzai Zen, which started and plays a major role in administering Hanazono University. Myōshinji officials tried to remove him from the Hanazono faculty, and Ichikawa was asked to resign. Supported by faculty members who valued academic freedom, Ichikawa refused to step down.

Undaunted, Ichikawa continued his social activism. He collaborated the following year with Ogasawara to found the progressive journal *The Era of Thought* (*Shisō kigen*), though it folded after only three issues. He served as a member of the Kyoto City Board of Education from October 1952 to September 1957, focusing his efforts on developing high school education.<sup>72</sup> He provided leadership for a Hanazono student group that opposed the 1952 Subversive Activities Prevention Law (*Hakai-katsudō bōshi hō*), and at one point he helped students Nishimura Eshin and Katō Shushin start a peace group, the Society to Preserve Peace (*Heiwa o Mamoru Kai*), whose name was changed, at Ichikawa’s urging, to the Society to Make Peace (*Heiwa o Tsukuru Kai*).<sup>73</sup>

Much of Ichikawa’s thought in the early 1950s focused on Chinese Zen figure Linji and Karl Marx. He wrestled with the question of how one might subjectively embody (*shutaiika suru*) Linji’s “making oneself master of each situation” and Marx’s notion of becoming master of oneself.<sup>74</sup> After Vietnamese Rinzai Zen priest Thich Quang Duc burned himself alive in a busy Saigon intersection in 1963 to protest the Vietnam War, Ichikawa renewed his efforts to unite the philosophical materialism of Marx with Buddhism, especially Zen.<sup>75</sup> This led him to conceptualize the tension and intersection between the vertical dimension of Linji’s spiritual freedom in “emptiness” and the horizontal dimension of Marxist freedom in the sociopolitical realm.<sup>76</sup> In these endeavors Ichikawa drew from Marxist thought to start granting Zen a critical historical awareness, which the tradition had generally lacked.<sup>77</sup>

Ichikawa also participated in the 1965 formation of the Federation for Peace in Vietnam (*Beheiren*). His cofounders included social critic Tsurumi Shunsuke (1922– ), novelist Kaikō Takeshi (1930–1989), and novelist and critic Oda Makoto (1939– ), and prominent among participating Buddhists were Ōnishi

Ryōkei, head priest of Kiyomizudera, and Yamada Mumon, who later became abbot of Myōshinji.<sup>78</sup> Tsurumi has commented that from the founding of the federation until its disbanding in 1973, Ichikawa was usually the oldest person at demonstrations.<sup>79</sup>

Ichikawa retired from Hanazono in 1972 and, as a professor emeritus, moved to Chiba, where his son Hiroshi lived. Ichikawa had his name removed from the Myōshinji monk's registry (*sōseki*) and returned to full standing as a layperson. He began to pursue "Liberation Zen Studies" (*kaihō no Zengaku*). According to his son, when Ichikawa moved to Chiba he sold most of his books but held on to Ogasawara's writings, including *The Philosophy of Experiential Understanding* (*Tainin no tetsugaku*). Ichikawa died of pneumonia in 1986.

Ichikawa viewed his postwar scholarship as an attempt to investigate and correct his wartime myopia. Though his exact political stance had been ambiguous, he passed harsh judgment on himself, censuring his writings that had supported the war effort while downplaying his more critical writings.<sup>80</sup> In his last book, *Religion under Japanese Fascism* (*Nihon fashizumu-ka no shūkyō*, 1975), Ichikawa confessed that he was not confident that if war were to break out again he would have the courage to stake his life on protesting it. He wondered in Buddhist terms whether his attachment to the truth was greater than his attachment to his physical well-being: "The war made it clear that I lacked the kind of mental constitution that would render me unafraid of emphasizing 'correct principles' (*shōri*)—especially in the sphere of social ethics—and act in accord with them as an expression of what Buddhism refers to as fearlessness (Skt. *vaiśāradya*; J. *mu'i*)."<sup>81</sup> He also bemoaned the fact that at the time of the 1925 Public Order Preservation Law and 1939 Religious Organizations Law<sup>82</sup> he did not commit himself to investigating the relevance of the passage in the *Lotus Sūtra*, "Suppose you encounter trouble with the king's law, face punishment, and are about to forfeit your life. Think on the power of that Perceiver of Sounds [the bodhisattva Kannon] and the executioner's sword will be broken to bits. Suppose you are imprisoned in cangue and lock, hands and feet bound by fetters and chains. Think on the power of that Perceiver of Sounds and they will fall off, leaving you free!"<sup>83</sup>

Ichikawa ultimately saw himself as having been bound by fetters of his own: "Nowhere in me was there any of the freedom of 'when he wants to walk, he walks, when he wants to sit, he sits,'<sup>84</sup> or '[While living become like a dead person, then] do as you wish.'<sup>85</sup> This clear fact festered within my own war responsibility."<sup>86</sup> He elaborates:

In my case, as *concrete* criticism of historical actuality became difficult, I read my expectations and hopes into actuality. I rationalized actuality

and gradually forgot my shame over my dereliction and impotence in thought and action. My statements about historical actuality and my overall conceptualization harbored self-persuasion and self-justification vis-à-vis that shame. Consciously and unconsciously I made light of the rupture in society, and in myself, between appearances (*tatemaē*) and actuality, while also making light of the differences—of content, structures, and fundamental principles—between the life space around me and the life space of world history, and because of this negligence my statements about public and private matters tended toward grandiloquence.<sup>87</sup>

Ichikawa explained what caused this negligence in the harsh social and political actuality of wartime Japan.

In my case, under the system of full spiritual mobilization at the time of the “clarification of the *kokutai*” [in the late 1930s] I failed to study and maintain firmly the subjectivity that never gets entangled in any constructed forms and can freely create all forms. And in response to the rampancy of State Shinto I failed to develop an unwavering approach of “destroying falsehood and revealing truth” (*haja kenshō*). In other words, I cannot say that I investigated and practiced the thought and conduct of that which “is not turned this way and that by circumstances but makes use of circumstances everywhere” and “avails itself of its circumstances” (*The Record of Linji*). In the widening gap between appearances (*tatemaē*) and the truth (*hone*), I failed to set up an internal dynamic of scrutinizing three related things: (1) my rationalization of actuality by reading my hopes into it, (2) the passive expectation that the irrationality of [present] actuality would eventually be judged and overcome by history, and (3) the claim that religion essentially transcends history.<sup>88</sup>

Ichikawa also acknowledged that he did not consider how he could overcome the irrationality of actuality and create history anew, or how he could link with others to engage in this praxis.

I failed to reflect deeply on the fact that if religion is not an escape from history through the “elegant flowing” (*fūryū*) of renunciates, it had to pursue, from a transhistorical vantage point, *concrete* criticism of the emperor’s stance, State Shinto, and emperor-system fascism during the

invasion of the mainland. Nor did I reflect on the fact that a religion that lacks the kind of social ethic that can function in such an actuality is ultimately the self-indulgence of people of leisure, the shame of the Great Vehicle. In short, I lived from day to day with everything gray and vague.<sup>89</sup>

What stands out in this personal grappling with war responsibility, according to Yamaori Tetsuo, is how Ichikawa went beyond treating responsibility as a feeling and gave it a more rigorous ethical treatment.<sup>90</sup> Nishimura Eshin argues that Ichikawa's significance lies in how he drew upon thinkers in Asia and the West to criticize institutionalized Zen while also clarifying the foundation of Zen.<sup>91</sup> Zen scholars Furuta Shōkin and Hayashi Munehide, cognizant of Ichikawa's critical approach, suggested giving Ichikawa the posthumous Buddhist name "Scholarship-Surpassing Zen Man Hakugen" (Zetsugaku Hakugen Zenjin).<sup>92</sup>

Through his writings Ichikawa also tried to clarify the universal dimension of Zen thought, not as something conceptual and abstract but as something individual, expressed in and through particular humans. In this respect his approach was humanistic, as reflected in his construct, "origin humanism."<sup>93</sup> With its attention to how the individual stands in the tense point of intersection (origin) between the vertical "transcendent" dimension of emptiness and the horizontal dimension of social ethics, this construct, as Ichikawa's son Hiroshi sees it, was central to Ichikawa's thought.<sup>94</sup> From the perspective of Tsurumi Shunsuke, Ichikawa discerned "the rift between the world of interrelational arising, in which all things live resplendently just as they are, and the world of historical actuality" with all of its struggles, and he recognized that Zen had lost the "wild fox" spirit that can remain vigilant in the point of intersection between these two dimensions.<sup>95</sup> To stand in that point of intersection, embody that spirit, and make decisions was what Ichikawa deemed true freedom, true Zen freedom, including the freedom to criticize the emperor.<sup>96</sup> Exercising that freedom, Ichikawa devoted his postwar life to reflecting honestly on his own wartime shortcomings, raising the issue of broader Buddhist war responsibility, analyzing the causes and legacy of Imperial-Way Buddhism, and laying the groundwork for a critical Zen social ethic