THE ASSOCIATION ZEN DE MONTRÉAL
THE ASSOCIATION ZEN DE MONTRÉAL:
A CASE STUDY IN SÔTÔ ZEN NONVIOLENCE

By:

BRIGITTE ROBERT, B.A.

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TITLE: The Association Zen de Montréal: A Case Study in Sōtō Zen Nonviolence

AUTHOR: Brigitte Robert, B.A. (Concordia University)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Mark Rowe

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Abstract

In this thesis, I address the popular idea that Buddhism is a religion of nonviolence through the case study of a Sōtō Zen Buddhist group in Montréal, Canada. I focus on the following question: Is nonviolence a major concern for practitioners at the Association Zen de Montréal (AZM), and, if yes, why? I first examine Zen Buddhist violence and nonviolence scripturally and historically to show that both trends are present in the tradition. I also address the way in which the founder of the AZM, Deshimaru Taisen, presented his actions during the Fifteen-Year War to his Western followers. After providing ethnographic details about the group and its mother organization, the Association Zen Internationale (AZI), I turn to a discussion of the possible models of nonviolence in Deshimaru’s writings. I then turn to practitioners’ own views of the relation between their Zen practice and nonviolence.

I demonstrate that although nonviolence is not a defining characteristic of the AZM, practitioners do not hesitate to advance that Zen has a nonviolence impact on their lives. Furthermore, I argue that the variety of responses to the topic of nonviolence in this group is best explained by looking at the different discourses present in their views. These are the Western traditions such as analytic psychology, Romanticism, and Enlightenment thinking, the modern discourse on Zen produced in the post-Meiji years, and Deshimaru’s own personality and behaviour, still emulated by his close disciples. Finally, the fact that Deshimaru never articulated a clear stance on nonviolence also helps explain why individuals possess different views on nonviolence.
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INTRODUCTION

During one of the interviews I conducted for this research, I sat in a white living room with Valerie, drinking the blueberry juice she prepared for me. Early in our conversation, this Argentinean woman explains her beginnings with Buddhism: “I was spiritually inclined, but I was disappointed with the Catholic Church. So when somebody came up with something that made more sense and that did not have such a history of violence as the Catholic Church, I thought: that’s interesting. And that’s how I got into it.” This contrast between the violence of Catholic history and the peaceful inclination of the Buddhist tradition is one that is definitely alive today. To historical events such as the Christian Crusades (eleventh to thirteenth century), many compare the edicts of King Aśoka (third century BCE), peaceful ruler who applied Buddhist ideals of nonviolence and tolerance to his governance.¹ The idea that Buddhism is a tradition teaching nonviolence is a popular one in the West.

Nevertheless, by giving closer attention to the history of the Buddhist traditions, it is possible to find many instances where Buddhists have used their religion to justify violence in armed conflicts. In the twentieth century, for instance, Japanese Zen Buddhist sects have actively participated in the Fifteen-Year War,² lending the state their support under the form of pro-war rhetoric, Buddhist chaplains, or rituals to help in its aggressive nationalistic endeavours. In the years following these events, individuals from the sects

¹ For example, Zen Buddhism scholar Kenneth Kraft, in his introduction to Inner Peace, World Peace, affirms: “History has recorded few Buddhist crusades or inquisitions” (Kraft, 1992: 1).
² On naming the War, see Ueda, 1995: 77; Ives, 1995: 38; and Ienaga, 1978: 248-249. By calling it the Fifteen-Year War, I am seeking to include the expansionist years into China, and not only the war with America.
have presented their apologies, and worked at promoting ways to prevent such events from happening again. It is also during these post-War years that Zen teachers started to establish themselves in Europe and the Americas to support Japanese communities abroad and disseminate their teachings to an ever-growing non-Asian community of individuals interested in Zen Buddhism.

Presented with both the ideal of a peaceful Buddhist tradition and the historical instance of a Buddhist sect participating in a war, some scholars of Buddhism have inquired into the factors that led to the events. Instead of adding to this scholarship, the present thesis jumps to the contemporary period and attempts to assess how practitioners in a particular group, the Association Zen de Montréal (a Sōtō Zen-affiliated centre founded in 1979), negotiate the topic of Zen Buddhist nonviolence. By conducting participant observation, reading the literature of the group, and asking its practitioners questions related to nonviolence, I sought to answer the following question: is nonviolence a major concern for practitioners of the centre, and, if yes, why? Through this case study of a Zen Buddhist group in the West and its relation to nonviolence, I will argue that while practitioners affirm the nonviolent impact of practice on their lives, the ways in which they explain this impact vary from one individual to another. I will address the factors responsible for this variety by exploring the different discourses at play in their explanations, starting with the founder of the group's presentation of the

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3 There are many other examples, such as other Buddhist sects’ participation in the violence of the Fifteen-Year War in both Japan and China, or the Sinhalese Buddhist violence against the Tamils in Sri Lanka. For China and Japan, see, among others, Demiéville 1957; Ketelaar 1990; Sharf 1993; 1995a; 1995c; Victoria 1997 [2006]; Yu 2005; Shahar 2008. For Sri Lanka, see, for example, Tambiah 1992.

4 Henceforth AZM. The group was founded by French-Canadians who followed Deshimaru in France and then founded a centre in Montréal. See chapter three for more details about the group.
Fifteen-Year War and violence in general. Other factors include discourses of modern Buddhism and Buddhism in the West, such as the importance of individual experience, the romantic interpretation of the doctrine of interdependence, and the concern with social justice.

1. Chapters

In order to prepare the grounds for my case study, I devote chapter one to an overview of some Western literature on Chan and Zen violence and nonviolence. In the first section of this chapter, I look into the popular image of Buddhism as a religion of nonviolence, and contrast it with instances of Chan and Zen rhetorical and physical violence. Presenting both scriptural and historical factors that have played a role in legitimizing rhetorical and physical violence, I demonstrate that although the Chan tradition developed an ontological stance of emptiness where the difference between killing and not-killing did not exist anymore, when it comes to physical violence, historical factors such as the necessity to defend the monastery may have played more important roles in leading to the use of violence by Chan monks. In Japan, where the theories of original enlightenment and the sudden precepts were popular, the unnecessary nature of the precepts (including not-killing) became more of a motive to justify antinomian behaviour and the use of violence. In this section, I also focus on the Meiji period (1868-1912) and after to show that both the emptiness of the precepts and the bodhisattva’s right to kill were elements of the tradition appealed to by Zen Buddhist individuals to justify Japan’s nationalistic endeavours. In section two of this chapter I
address the post-War years' reassessment of Zen Buddhism in relation to violence, and I
survey the literature on Zen and ethics with a focus on its articulation in the West. I thus
offer, in chapter one, a historical background in which to situate the various discourses at
play in Zen Buddhist violence and nonviolence.

In chapter two, I start focusing on my case study by giving attention to the
founder's treatment of the Fifteen-Year War and his role in it as a member of the
Japanese occupying forces in Indonesia. In his autobiography, the only resource I could
find to get access to his actions during the war years, Deshimaru narrates anecdotes in
which he attempts to avoid the violence of the War, braving the danger entailed in going
against the nationalistic and militaristic endeavours of his country. Deshimaru's
descriptions of his master Sawaki Kōdō (1880-1965) (infamous for his participation in the
Russo-Japanese War [1904-1905] and his pro-war rhetoric) as concerned with peace and
nonviolence are further evidence of Deshimaru’s concern to present a Zen scrubbed of its
violent connotations. By giving attention to the context of his writings, the Paris of the
1970s, and comparing his autobiography to the literary genre of Buddhist sacred
biography, I demonstrate that although not a pacifist, Deshimaru still creates a model of
nonviolent action during a time of conflict in his narrative.

In chapter three, I turn the discussion toward the AZM and its mother association,
the France-based Association Zen Internationale,⁵ and consider some of their basic ideas
and practices. I start by situating the development of the group in its European and then
Canadian contexts, highlighting its emphasis on the meditative practice of zazen, the

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⁵ Henceforth AZI. Group founded in 1970 by Deshimaru in Paris. The AZI now possesses centres in many
countries. See chapter three for more details.
importance of the figure of the master for the practitioners, and the group's organization since Deshimaru's demise. While at first glance these elements do not seem to be determining factors for the topic of nonviolence, I contend that taking them into account helps to explain the variety of discourses of nonviolence at the AZM. For example, the emphasis on individual transformation through meditation can lead individuals to seek an alternative point of view from which to perceive the world around them. Some practitioners, furthermore, depict an interdependent world view in which individuals are deeply interconnected, to the point where hurting another person is the same as hurting oneself.

In chapter four, I delve into the topic of nonviolence from, first, the perspective of Deshimaru's writings and oral teachings, and second, the perspectives of adherents to the AZM. I demonstrate that although Deshimaru does not present an ethic of nonviolence in his teachings, when asked about it, his followers do adhere to the view that Zen Buddhism leads to nonviolence. In answering questions concerning the topic, they appeal to different elements contained in Deshimaru's teachings, features of the modern Buddhist discourses, and their own experience with Zen Buddhism. The fact that Zen nonviolence at the AZM is constructed from several layers of understanding, therefore, helps explain its variety and sometimes inconsistency. Indeed, some practitioners may argue that violence, in the form of shouting or hitting another person, can be necessary in certain situations, while others may leave less space for such possibilities. In order to present the answers of the practitioners interviewed on the topic, I have organized my results into two main narratives, both represented by a particular interviewee and
complemented by concurring answers. I used such method for clarity and flow, but I must add that neither narrative is totally representative of all the information gathered through my field work.

2. Themes

2.1. Nonviolence and Buddhism

Since I address the theme of nonviolence in Buddhism, a discussion of this term in relation to Buddhism will help to clarify the way in which I will use it throughout my thesis. But first, I will introduce the term nonviolence in its broad sense. Nonviolence, literally the absence of violence, can designate many things. It has been argued by theorists of nonviolence that one thing that it is not is pacifism. Mark Kurlansky, for example, writes that “Pacifism is treated almost as a psychological condition. It is a state of mind. Pacifism is passive; but nonviolence is active.”6 Due to its linguistic nature as a negation of violence, what nonviolence is also depends on how violence is defined, itself not an unproblematic task.7 Bat'end ter Haar defines violence as “both the licit and illicit (culturally sanctioned and non-sanctioned) use of / threat with concrete / symbolic corporeal / physical violence.”8 The advantages of such a definition for the approach of religiously inspired violence lie in its inclusion, first, of culturally sanctioned violence, and, second, of symbolic violence. On the other hand, it limits the scope of violence to interpersonal manifestations. A broader definition is the more encompassing one that

Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung has provided, which sees violence as "... present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations." In this definition, one can question what it means to prevent someone from reaching his or her full potential, but such a phrasing has the ability to address more subtle forms of violence, such as structural and psychological. In fact, according to this definition, the mere act of wearing clothes that are manufactured in oppressive conditions is considered violent. Throughout my thesis, I will use "nonviolence" in the broadest sense, as an attempt to avoid causing violence in its various manifestations.

Beyond the question of what type of violence nonviolence addresses, two main ways of thinking about nonviolence are to see it as either a technique, or as an ethical philosophy. In the first instance, it means renouncing the use of violence in order to effect some personal, social, or political change within a particular situation. Gene Sharp, theorist of nonviolence, defines nonviolent action as "a means of conducing conflicts and waging struggles" that may be adopted out of religious or ethical motives, but are "based on considerations of expediency." Such an approach to nonviolence, therefore, considers nonviolence as a means to an end, and does not necessarily imply an attempt to integrate it with life in a general way. On the other hand, nonviolence as an ethic involves a commitment to avoid violent acts not only during conflicts but also in everyday actions. A famous embodiment of this approach to nonviolence is Mohandas K.

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10 For a detailed description and definition of the different categories of violence, see Barak 2003.
Gandhi (1869–1948), who waged his struggle against the British colonial powers with nonviolent techniques such as civil disobedience, but also believed that nonviolence had to be integrated to people’s way of life. For example, he wrote: “It is violence and delusion and ignorance to say that nonviolence cannot be practiced at all times, in all places, and fully and so to set it aside.”\(^\text{13}\) For Gandhi, nonviolence was thus more than a technique.

Both scholarly and popular views of the Buddhist tradition generally agree to label its doctrines and practices as guided by nonviolence, or *ahimsā*.\(^\text{14}\) In his work on Buddhist ethics, for example, scholar Peter Harvey argues that nonviolence and peace “are certainly both strongly represented in its value system.”\(^\text{15}\) In his introduction to *Buddhism and Peace: Issues of Violence, Wars, and Self-Sacrifice*, Buddhism scholar James A. Benn writes: “The practices and doctrines that this religion has advanced over the past two and a half millennia in order to create and maintain peace as well as to avoid and eventually to eradicate violence have been widely celebrated as one of the most significant aspects of its rich and profound heritage.”\(^\text{16}\) In the past decades, many Buddhists of different affiliations have emphasized particular teachings and promoted their nonviolent orientation. Famous examples of Buddhists considered as peace activists are Tibetan leader the XIVth Dalai Lama (b. 1935), Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh

\(^{13}\) Gandhi, 2002: 106.
\(^{14}\) The term *ahimsā* derives from the Sanskrit root *hims*, “a desirative form of the verb *han*, to kill or injure or strike.” With the negative prefix “a,” it means “absence of the desire to kill or harm.” *Ahimsā* is also the first vow in Jainism (Chapple, 1992: 50-51).
\(^{15}\) Harvey, 2000: 239.
\(^{16}\) Benn, 2007: 1.
(b. 1926), and Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi (b. 1945).\textsuperscript{17} In the West, elements of the Zen tradition conducive to nonviolence have been brought forward by individuals such as Robert Aitken (b. 1917), former rōshi at the Honolulu Diamond Sangha in Hawai‘i, Zen teacher Lin Jensen (b. 1932) of the Chico Zen Sangha in California, and Bernard Glassman (b. 1939), founder of the Zen Peacemakers.\textsuperscript{18}

In the twentieth century, the nonviolent aspect of Zen teachings and of many other Buddhist traditions have been placed into the category of “engaged Buddhism.”\textsuperscript{19} Therefore, in order to better grasp the nature of nonviolent ideas and the various forms they have taken in the modern world, it is important to address this larger category. The term “engaged Buddhism” was allegedly coined for the first time by Thich Nhat Hanh in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{20} Furthermore, socially engaged Buddhism “has come to cover a broad range of approaches, unified by the notion that Buddhist teachings and practices can be directly applied to participation in the social, political, economic and ecological affairs of the nonmonastic world.”\textsuperscript{21} In terms of nonviolence as a category of engaged Buddhism, Christopher S. Queen, a pioneering scholar of engaged Buddhism, provides a long list of Buddhist nonviolent resources:

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\textsuperscript{17} Among these individuals, both the Dalai Lama and Aung San Suu Kyi received a Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 and 1991, respectively. Thich Nhat Hanh was nominated for the same prize in 1967 by Martin Luther King, Jr. For a more extensive list of Buddhist individuals promoting peace, see Harvey, 2000: 270-285.
\textsuperscript{18} In terms of peace activities, Aitken is the founder of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (see discussion in chapter one, fn. 164), Lin Jensen has sat in zazen to protest the war in Iraq (see McMahan, 2008: 84), and Glassman has introduced a number of programs such as “street retreats” and prison meditation to address social ills (McMahan, 2008: 47).
\textsuperscript{19} For example, in his chapter on engaged Buddhism, Kraft discusses peace movements such as the Order of Interbeing (Thich Nhat Hanh’s organization) and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, co-founded by Aitken (see Kraft, 1992: 11-30).
\textsuperscript{21} Rothberg, 1998: 268.
... its founding manifesto, the Four Noble Truths..., offering relief from the causes of human suffering; its cardinal moral precept, to refrain from harming living beings (ahimsa); the practice of lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity (brahmaviharas); the doctrines of selflessness (anatta), interdependence (paticcasamuppada), and non-dualism (sunyata); the paradigm of enlightened beings (bodhisattvas) who employ skillful devices (upaya) to liberate others from suffering; and the image of the great “wheel-turners” (cakravatin) and moral leaders (dhammaraja) who conquer hearts and minds—not enemies and territories—by their exceptional wisdom and kindness.22

Although an in-depth analysis of how each of these aspects of the Buddhist tradition has been used to promote nonviolence in different historical and socio-cultural contexts would be far beyond the scope of this thesis, a few examples will hopefully suffice to show how some leaders have used Buddhist ideas to either avoid or struggle against violence.23

In Asia, this phenomenon is represented by individuals such as Sulak Sivaraksa, a Thai reformer and activist who co-founded the International Network of Engaged Buddhists with other Buddhist leaders in 1989.24 For Sivaraksa, the first precept of non-killing “naturally calls for the settling of internal and external conflict through nonviolent means,” and “... also means not to live luxuriously or consume wastefully while others are dying of starvation.”25 One can see, here, how the Buddhist “moral cardinal precept,” as Queen calls it in the above quotation, is turned into a social ideal aimed at fighting

22 In Queen 1998 [2007]: 15.
23 Literature on Buddhism and nonviolence offers many case studies in which particular teachings have been used to react nonviolently to conflict situations, as well as to struggle against different types of violence. See Kraft 1992; Queen and King 1996; and Queen 2000.
against not only violence in interpersonal conflicts, but also structural violence. Another Buddhist leader who has identified the Buddhist precepts with the goal of promoting nonviolence in the world is Thich Nhat Hanh. In addition to the five lay precepts, he recommends fourteen additional rules to be respected by followers of the group he founded, the Order of Interbeing. His twelfth precept, an elaboration on the precept not to kill, adds “Do not let others kill.” He thus extends the precept forbidding killing in such a way as to help preventing indirect ways of killing.

Besides addressing different individuals and groups depicting Buddhism as a nonviolent tradition, it is important to notice the recent scholarly debate on the relative modernity of a Buddhism serving the social aspect of a nonviolent practice. For many, the social involvement of Buddhists can be attributed to the encounter of their tradition with Christianity and its ‘social gospel.’ Certain scholars see no problems in seeing this development as the natural adaptation of a tradition that has changed so much throughout its history. Cynthia Eller expresses this view when she writes the following:

When the search for a genuinely Buddhist nonviolence is filtered through the latent demands of a predominantly Christian conscience, what emerges is a new Buddhism and a new Buddhist ethics, no less valid than the many new Buddhisms that have been produced in the 2,500 years of the Dharma’s movement eastward around the globe.

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26 Kraft, 1992: 21. This group is the continuation of Nhat Hanh’s original Tiep Hien Order in Vietnam, founded in 1964.
28 The opposite movement, namely the cooperation of Buddhist groups with nationalistic goals, can also be included in the category of modern Buddhism. Buddhism and modernity scholar David L. McMahan notes this trend in his work on Buddhist modernism, providing the examples of prewar Japan and contemporary Sri Lanka (2008: 42).
29 Eller, 1992: 91.
On the other hand, some scholars have tried to understand Buddhist involvement in issues of violence also as a response to "the impact of modernity and its attendant forces of industrialization and urbanization on Asian societies."\(^{30}\) Rather than an issue of whether Buddhist nonviolence is the result of Western influences on the tradition, therefore, a more encompassing approach lies in the question of the modernity of such a phenomenon.

There are many issues at stake in the question of whether Buddhist social involvement, including but not limited to nonviolence, is a traditional element. On one side are the interests of those who desire to present social engagement as an authentic part of Buddhism, thus justifying such an engagement as contiguous with the religion.\(^{31}\) For instance, some argue that by teaching for forty years, the Buddha himself initiated the first step of a socially engaged Buddhism.\(^{32}\) Or, as Thich Nhat Hanh argues, one can think that "Engaged Buddhism is just Buddhism. If you practice Buddhism in your family, in society, it is engaged Buddhism."\(^{33}\) On the other hand, an array of scholars of Buddhism and Buddhists (and Buddhist scholars, one might add) maintain that social engagement is a modern development of the tradition, and emphasize that thinking otherwise is a matter of methodological naïveté and historical reconstruction.\(^{34}\) For

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\(^{30}\) Dietrick, 2003: 255. Notable scholars who have discussed the issue of modernity and Buddhist social involvement are Robert N. Bellah (1965), Donald K. Swearer (1970), and, more recently, David L. McMahan (2008).


\(^{33}\) Quoted in Rothberg, 1998: 272.

\(^{34}\) Yarnall, 2003: 299. Again, Yarnall provides a list of individuals arguing along these lines, calling them the "modernists" and noting that most come from a Western cultural background: "Robert Aitken, Cynthia
example, Queen sees engaged Buddhism as “unprecedented, and thus tantamount to a new chapter in the history of the tradition,” and goes so far as calling it a fourth vehicle, or yāna. Robert Aitken also acknowledges the impact of Christianity and his concern to adapt his teachings to his Western audience in his interpretation of Zen Buddhism. He shares this opinion in his work on Buddhist ethics, writing that “[a]s Western Buddhists, we are also Judeo-Christian in outlook, perhaps without knowing it. Inevitably we take the precepts differently, just as the Japanese took them differently when they received them from China, and the Chinese differently when Bodhidharma appeared.”

Underlying the debate concerning the source of engaged Buddhism is thus the question of whether it is a revival of certain elements of the tradition or a completely new adaptation. Whether engaged Buddhism is a recent development or not, I will employ the definition provided by the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, which considers it as a phenomenon that attempts to “address sources of human suffering outside the cravings and ignorance of the sufferer—such as social, political and economic injustice, warfare and violence, and environmental degradation….” It must also be noted that the larger issue of the identity of engaged Buddhists, for my thesis, is only of peripheral importance. Since I focus on the nonviolent aspects of Sōtō Zen Buddhism as understood by practitioners of a Canadian community, it suffices to situate Zen and nonviolence as part

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Queen, 2000: 1.

Queen, 2000: 24.

Aitken, 1984: 13. This statement obviously takes for granted the establishment of a special lineage dating back to the Buddha, a historical construct already present in Tang China (for example, see Faure, 1997).

Definition from the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, quoted in Jones, 2003: 178.
of the larger context of engaged Buddhism. Here, I am primarily concerned with how practitioners of the AZM view and practice nonviolence, and not with whether they consider themselves "engaged Buddhists" or not.

2.2. Buddhism in the West

As this thesis addresses a Buddhist group in a Western country, a few words must be said about Buddhism in the West and some of the issues scholars encounter when studying the topic. First, we must deal with the discussion surrounding which typology to use to differentiate "ethnic Asians born into a Buddhist cultural heritage" from "non-Asian converts to Buddhism." The category of "Two Buddhisms," first introduced in 1979 by pioneering scholar of Buddhism in the West Charles S. Prebish, has been questioned by scholars, but it still stands today as an important heuristic device. A notable effort in that sense was proposed by Victor Hori, third-generation Canadian Japanese and Buddhist scholar. When addressing Buddhism in the West, he emphasizes the mode of transmission (as opposed to the community’s Asian/ethnic or non-Asian/convert background) as a useful factor to understand the way this tradition spread in North America and Europe. He thus uses the category "ethnic religion" to represent

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40 Prebish, 1979: 51. (See also Nattier, 1998: 320, fn. 13).
42 As argued by Nattier, "At first glance this colourful assortment of Buddhists seems virtually impossible to characterize in any meaningful way. Yet characterize them we must, for simply to list them all will tell us next to nothing" (1998: 188). Therefore, even though, as pointed out by anthropologist Wendy Cadge, "the current picture is considerably more complex" (cited in Numrich, 2003: 62) than what this dichotomy presents, it seems that, for the time being, it may still be useful. Yet it is important to qualify this use of the terms as a heuristic device employed strictly for the sake of articulating the identity of the groups addressed in this paper.
individuals whose interest in practicing Buddhism is "limited to preserving their own ethnic culture and identity in North America."\textsuperscript{43} The group Hori labels "missionary religion," on the other hand, includes individuals who "came (or in some cases returned) with the deliberate intention of teaching Buddhism to Westerners."\textsuperscript{44} A similar point was made by Jan Nattier, who differentiated types of Buddhisms on the basis of the way in which they arrived in the West.\textsuperscript{45}

These categories, again, are not without their own difficulties. For example, an obvious obstacle lies in naming the generation born to the first generation of "convert" Buddhists. Jeff Wilson, a scholar of American Religions and of Buddhism in the West, makes an interesting observation concerning the use of the term "ethnic," asking in the postscript to his work: "... how can we allege that Japanese ethnic influences are greater in Japanese-American Zen than European-American ethnic influences in convert Zen?"\textsuperscript{46} Indeed, since the Japanese Buddhism that was introduced to the West was one that previously went through the post-Meiji revitalization of Buddhism in Japan,\textsuperscript{47} and claimed to be "in exact agreement with the doctrines of modern sciences,"\textsuperscript{48} it may be possible to perceive some American ethnic influences in both "ethnic" and "convert" Japanese Buddhism.

\textsuperscript{43} Hori, 1994.
\textsuperscript{44} Hori, 1994.
\textsuperscript{45} Her three proposed categories are an "import Buddhism" that is demand driven, an "export Buddhism" that is not actively sought but introduced through missionary work, and a "baggage Buddhism," her version of ethnic Buddhism (Nattier, 1998: 189).
\textsuperscript{46} Wilson, 2009: 195.
\textsuperscript{47} McMahan, 2002: 219-220. This process was highly influenced by Western thought. See also Sharf 1995a, as well as further discussion in chapter three.
\textsuperscript{48} Søren, quoted in McMahan, 2002: 220.
Despite this blurring of the categories of "ethnic" and "non-Asian" Buddhists, they remain helpful in the sense that they recognize that Buddhism, in certain cases, has come to the West through individuals intending to introduce it to non-Asians. In the case of Zen Buddhism in the West, it seems that most practitioners are non-Asian converts who followed the missionary pattern of conversion. This pattern can be observed rather early in the development of Zen in America in the converting intents of individuals such as Sōen Shaku (1859-1919) and his students Senzaki Nyōgen (1876-1958) and Daisetz Teitaro (D.T.) Suzuki (1870-1966), who traveled to "promote the Rinzai lineage in America."49 The same can be said of later individuals such as Yasutani Hakuun (1885-1973), Suzuki Shinryū (1904-1971), Maezumi Taizan (1931-1995), and Philip Kapleau (1912-2004) (a convert, but also a non-Japanese missionary), who all participated in the establishment of Zen centres in America.

The development of Japanese Buddhism in Canada is similar to that of the United States.50 The first established Asians were Chinese and Japanese, and the main form of Japanese Buddhism brought was Jōdo Shinshū.51 The province of Québec received its first Asian immigrants in the late 1880s, and these were mostly Chinese moving from British Columbia, with a minority of Japanese immigrants.52 The first Japanese temple in the francophone province was affiliated to the Jōdo Shinshū-based Japanese Canadian Buddhist Churches of Canada, and only a few Zen meditation groups existed in the 1960s.

50 For a detailed account of the development of Buddhism in the United States, see Fields, 1981 [1986]: 76-82.
51 Matthews, 2002: 121.
52 Dorais, 2006: 120.
and 1970s.\textsuperscript{53} While around half of Buddhist temples and meditation centres at the turn of the century were “operated and frequented by francophone or anglophone non-Asian Québécois,” the population of non-Asian Buddhists totalled only eight percent of the province’s Buddhist adherents.\textsuperscript{54} Such statistics may not illustrate the dissemination of Buddhism with total accuracy, since there are also some problems with denomination when it comes to counting both Asian and non-Asian Buddhists, or “converts.” On one hand, some Asian individuals may practice traditional Buddhist rituals but may not consider themselves “Buddhists” when it comes to the census.\textsuperscript{55} On the other, the Buddhist label neglects individuals who may practice at centres but refuse to call themselves “Buddhists,” such as occasional practitioners.\textsuperscript{56} Nevertheless, the ratio of the number of centres to the number of adherents in the case of non-Asian Buddhists remains interesting since it presents a picture in which a few Buddhist adherents are spread over many centres.

Notwithstanding self-identification, Buddhism in the West scholar Bruce Matthews counted about seven hundred Buddhist temples, centres, libraries, and meditation groups in Canada in 2002.\textsuperscript{57} Furthermore, while some scholarly attention has been given to so-called “ethnic” Buddhism in the province of Québec,\textsuperscript{58} little has been

\textsuperscript{53} Dorais, 2006: 120, 137 (fn. 1), with reference to Fradette 2002.
\textsuperscript{54} Dorais, 2006: 121.
\textsuperscript{55} See, for example, Boisvert et al., 2006: 142-143.
\textsuperscript{56} The problem of categories and statistics to account for Buddhism in France are discussed in Lenoir, 1999a: 25-35.
\textsuperscript{57} Matthews, 2002: 120.
\textsuperscript{58} For example, Dorais 2006 presents Vietnamese Buddhism in the province, and Boisvert, et al. 2006 discusses “convert” Buddhists but mostly focus on ethnic communities around Montréal.
written about its opposite category, “convert” Buddhism. This situation may be a response to the academic attention given to the American “Zen boom” of the 1950s and 1960s, which has focused on the convert aspect of Zen in America only. Other than contextualizing the AZM to better understand the ways in which nonviolence is approached in the group, my thesis is thus partly an attempt to remedy the lack of ethnographic information on convert Buddhism in the province.

3. Method

This thesis is based on one month of fieldwork at the AZM conducted from the end of May 2008 to the end of June 2008. During this period, my participant observation consisted of a one-day introductory session, a five-day summer camp, and daily meditation at the dōjō. I also gathered information through eight interviews lasting around fifty minutes with each practitioner who volunteered to be interviewed and five anonymous questionnaires collected at the end of my research. Both interviews and

59 There is little attention given to Zen in Matthews’ edited volume on Buddhism in Canada (2006), nor in Janet McLellan’s work on Buddhism in Toronto (1999).

60 Asai and Williams, 1999: 20. To counteract that tendency, Senryō Asai and Duncan Ryūken Williams propose the examination of Japanese American temple economy, which shows that their main source of revenue comes from death rites and cultural activities and that only a minimum amount is made and spent on the study of Buddhism (1999: 23, 28). They then argue that “the Zen temple (which they contrast to the usually non-ethnic Zen center) has served as a Japanese American community center with its major activities geared toward the maintenance of community and familial ties through death rites and ‘Japanese culture’ activities, including tea ceremonies, folk dancing, and other Japanese cultural events” (1999: 20). Therefore, Zen in the West should not be considered only as consisting of a purely non-ethnic or “convert” faith focused on meditation, but also as a tradition kept by Japanese ethnic communities, similar to the status of Jodo Shinshū, or Japanese Pure Land (see, for example, McLellan, 1999: 35-73). While Zen meditation may still be practiced in Japanese ethnic temples, however, the majority of these practitioners are non-Japanese, and the meditation hall (zendō) is only peripheral to the hall for services (hondō) (Asai and Williams, 1999: 29-30).

61 The dōjō is a Japanese word (道場) used by practitioners to refer to the room in which they sit zazen and do other related practices such as ceremonies and chants. The literal meaning of this term is “place of the way.” Practitioners at the AZM often refer to the “dōjō” when they are speaking of the centre. I will use this term throughout my thesis in their way.
Questionnaires contained a first set of questions geared toward acquiring basic information such as the age, employment, religious background and initial contact with the AZM in order to get a general ethnographic portrait of the group. The second set of questions focused more specifically on the topic of Zen and nonviolence, and contained questions such as "In what ways would you say your practice impacts your everyday life?" "Do you think that Zen Buddhism has the potential to solve interpersonal conflicts in nonviolent ways?" or "Do you think that Zen Buddhism has the potential to solve conflicts in nonviolent ways on a larger scale?" 62

There are a few important details to note concerning the results of my research. First, since my purpose in this thesis has not been to present a complete ethnographic portrait of the AZM, I will limit my presentation of the group to basic information that will help put teachings and practices in context. Additionally, most individuals who agreed to participate in my research have practiced for ten years or more. Having practiced longer, they may have felt more comfortable in sharing their experience. Indeed, with the exception of one who has been practicing for only two years, the other participants have all been practicing for eight years or longer. My observations, therefore, are limited to practitioners who have a serious level of involvement with the centre, and do not necessarily apply to individuals who have just started their practice. Such a sample of practitioners, therefore, adds a bias to my research, in that its results will reflect the situation of experienced individuals who have a rather frequent practice.

62 See questionnaire and interview guide in Appendix A.
In addition to data I gathered through fieldwork, I use a variety of other sources of information about the AZM. In terms of general information, I refer to the websites of both the AZI and the AZM, which contain basic details about the practices and the way they present it to the wider public. I also use literature from the AZI, which is mostly composed of works collecting the teachings of Deshimaru, although some older disciples have also published a few books. Since Deshimaru spoke Japanese and a little English, all of his works were created with the collaboration of disciples willing to help him translate his teachings into French. Some works are also collections of oral teachings (kusen and mondo) that were registered by disciples. An important piece of writing for chapter two is Deshimaru’s autobiography, and I treat the limitations of this particular genre in that chapter. For my chapters on the AZM, I also use some of the oral teachings of important AZI teachers who come regularly to the province. During summer camps or sesshins, these teachings are taped, transcribed, and sold at the dojō. I also used various pamphlets and letters to the members gathered during my fieldwork. In terms of translation, I translated all the interviews from the French except one, and translated most works from Deshimaru and his disciples from the French. Since I clarify such details here, I will not mention issues of translation again for these particular cases.

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63 I also use the websites of groups related to Deshimaru but who severed their ties with the AZI in my discussion of Zen in Europe and the aftermath of Deshimaru’s demise (especially in chapter three). See my internet sources in the bibliography.

64 A kusen is an oral teaching disseminated while practitioners are sitting in zazen. A mondo is a public question-and-answer period during which practitioners sit together around the master and ask their questions (Deshimaru, 1974 [1975; 1977; 1981]: 272).

65 The only interview I conducted in English was my interview with Valerie.

66 The only exception is Deshimaru, 1981 [1985] (I used the English translation). Note that I also used a French translation for Deshimaru, 1984, which was published originally in English.
CHAPTER ONE: Historical Background

Introduction

This chapter provides some historical background to the themes of nonviolence and violence in Zen Buddhism. The first section sets up a discussion of Buddhism and nonviolence in general, demonstrating that although the Buddhist tradition is usually praised for its nonviolent orientation, its history contains instances of violence as well. I then focus more specifically on the Zen tradition and its Chinese forerunner, Chan, providing examples of both rhetorical and physical violence. Since the present thesis is about a contemporary Sōtō Zen group, I devote greater attention to the Meiji and post-Meiji Zen Buddhist support of Japan’s nationalistic and militaristic endeavours. In the second section of this chapter, I address contemporary treatments of this Zen violence, both from the Buddhist and non-Buddhist academic worlds. I briefly present the main lines of this criticism of the Zen sects, as well as some of the recent attempts to articulate a Zen Buddhist ethical system. This section also lays out a discussion of nonviolence from the Zen Buddhist perspective, treating it as one of the many elements at play in contemporary Zen Buddhist ethical concerns. In accordance with the topic of nonviolence in a Western Sōtō Zen group, I finally narrow my discussion to instances that demonstrate how this Zen nonviolence has been articulated and promoted in the West.

67 The term “Zen” is the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese term “Chan,” which is turn is a transcription of the Sanskrit term “dhyāna.” The latter term refers to a state of deep meditation (Harvey, 1990: 153). As Faure emphasizes, it is important to treat the Chan and Zen traditions separately since they possess “historical, cultural, and doctrinal differences” (Faure, 1993: 3).
68 I also elaborate further on the Meiji years and the Fifteen-Year War period in chapter two.
This preliminary overview of Zen violence and nonviolence provides the context for the presentation of nonviolence as expressed in a Montréal-based Sōtō Zen group.

1. Tracing Violence in Buddhism

One of the most often cited Buddhist tenets justifying the nonviolent orientation of the tradition is the Buddhist precept against injuring living beings. In the Vinayas, or Buddhist monastic codes, the act of killing a human being is considered pārājika, a serious offence that can lead to one’s excommunication from the monastic order. Being an important precept adopted by both laypeople and monastics, the prohibition against taking life even extends to keeping a vegetarian diet in Chinese indigenous texts. For example, the third lesser principle of the Fanwang jing (The Book of Brahma’s Net, compiled between 440 and 480 CE), mentions the following: “Celui qui mange de la chair se charge d’une culpabilité immense, et celui qui le fait le sachant et le voulant se rend coupable d’un péché secondaire faisant souillure.” The precept of non-killing also became an important aspect of the bodhisattva ideal. The Daśabhūmika Sūtra (Ten Stages Sūtra, composed between the first and second centuries CE), which offers a detailed explanation of the ten stages of the bodhisattva path, states that an individual

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70 Demiéville, 1957: 262. On loss of communion as a punishment for the transgression of a pārājika, see Clarke (forthcoming). The usual association of pārājika with the expulsion from the order has been questioned by Shayne Clarke 2009, who demonstrates that penance was available to those who had committed pārājika offences in all but the Pāli monastic code. It remains, however, that pārājika offences are seriously punished in either case.
72 In Fanwang jing, 42.
"must not hate any being and cannot kill a living creature even in thought." These various sources thus show one major aspect of the nonviolent orientation of Buddhist doctrine, especially as it pertains to the Mahāyāna tradition. On the other hand, it would be impossible to ignore opposing trends in the Buddhist tradition, which legitimate killing for certain purposes, both in the scriptures and historically. The following section approaches issues of Buddhist violence doctrinally and historically with a focus on the Chan and Zen Buddhist tradition.

1.1. Scriptural Aspects of the Justification of Violence

That the injunction against killing can be circumvented in particular cases is attested in some sūtras, treatises, and monastic codes. A frequently cited example in the Mahāyāna tradition comes from Asaṅga’s (fourth or fifth century CE) Bodhisattva-bhilmi, which contains a whole section on ethics. The following lines illustrate the logic behind the bodhisattva’s resort to violence, here the killing of a human being:

Accordingly, the bodhisattva may behold a robber or thief engaged in committing a great many deeds of immediate retribution, being about to murder many hundreds of magnificent living beings... for the sake of material goods. Seeing this, he forms this thought in his mind: “If I take the life of this sentient being, I myself may be reborn as one of the creatures of hell. Better that I be reborn a creature of hell than this living being, having committed a deed of immediate retribution, should go straight to hell.” With such an attitude the bodhisattva ascertains that the thought is virtuous or indeterminate and then, feeling constrained, with only a thought of mercy for the consequence, he takes the life of that living being. There is no fault, but a spread of merit.  

74 Cited in Kraft, 1992: 5.
75 Bodhisattva-bhilmi, 70-71.
This type of killing, qualified as “skilful means” (Skt. *upāya-kauśalya*),\(^{76}\) is only one example of how breaking the precepts can be justified. A similar logic is found, in fact, in the *Upāya-kauśalya sūtra* (first century BCE),\(^{77}\) in which compassionate killing is also enacted to prevent bandits from committing bad deeds (and being born in hell), while at the same time saving the lives of merchants.\(^{78}\) Such justifications were also extended, in certain texts, to killing individuals guilty of slandering the *Dharma*. In the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (fourth century CE),\(^{79}\) in fact, it is said that there is no bad karma in killing an *icchāntika*, or “one who can never be enlightened.”\(^{80}\) These particular cases,\(^{81}\) therefore, demonstrate that within early Mahāyāna literature, both proscription and justification of killing were already present.

In the above examples justifying killing, the bodhisattva willing to kill for the sake of saving another being (or beings) from the karmic consequences of their acts also accepts the karmic results entailed by such an act. In other words, killing is still punished through negative karmic baggage that bodhisattvas are willing to take upon themselves. After observing these justifications for killing, it is interesting to address an alternative logic that allows killing—the apparent non-existence of either killing or non-killing. Here

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\(^{76}\) Harvey, 2000: 130.


\(^{78}\) Harvey, 2000: 135-136.

\(^{79}\) Harvey, 2000: 137, Ch. *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經, T 374.12.

\(^{80}\) Harvey, 2000: 138, 470.

\(^{81}\) There are other examples of this type, but the purpose of this chapter is not to offer an extensive description of the different cases in which killing is permitted.
the Dazhidulun, a commentary on the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra attributed to Nāgārjuna (c. 150-250 CE),\textsuperscript{82} appears to be one of the earliest articulations of this trend:

> Therefore, living beings in fact are non-existence. There will be no sin of killing if there is non-existence of living beings; no one can be said to observe the precept if there is no sin of killing. ... Just like that there will be no sin if one commits killing in dream and kills the image in mirror, so is one who kills empty form of the five aggregates of [a living being].\textsuperscript{83}

In later developments of Mahāyāna Buddhism, as seen in the Dazhidulun, it thus seems that the consequences of violent acts lose their weight, as the empty, non-dual nature of reality is articulated.\textsuperscript{84} These writings, furthermore, provide the seeds for an ideological genealogy used by the Chan and Zen traditions to justify antinomian or violent behaviour.

Since part of this section’s goal is to identify the main scriptural foundations for the justification of violence in Zen, it is pertinent to give some attention to the development of the idea that killing does not exist in the Chan and Zen traditions. Since a comprehensive account of the issue would be beyond the scope of this chapter, I will outline the broad lines of thinking that have led to an ontological stance of emptiness where differentiations between right and wrong, killing and not killing, do not hold. Radically advancing the notion that reality is ultimately empty, and that any enlightened being who has tapped into the insight may not suffer the karmic consequences of killing or breaking other precepts, this thinking sheds light on Buddhist antinomian behaviour

\textsuperscript{82} Harvey, 1990: 95, Ch. 大智度論, Skt. Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra, T 1509. 25.
\textsuperscript{83} Cited in Yu, 2005: 6.
\textsuperscript{84} Such stance, however, does not necessarily consist in a literal encouragement to murder. As East Asian religion and philosophy scholar Christoph Kleine argues: “Most of the authors passionately warned against an antinomian abuse of their theories which were originally not meant to be taken as guidelines for the actual conduct of unenlightened commoners” (Kleine, 2006: 90).
and also Buddhist justifications of the use of violence in conflicts. I will now turn to key developments in Chinese indigenous writings relevant to the creation of an empty stance where the difference between killing and not-killing does not exist.

An important step in the articulation of an empty reality where dual conceptions such as right and wrong action do not exist is the assertion that these conceptions are simply constructions of the deluded mind. In this respect, the *Awakening of Faith*, attributed to Asvaghoṣa in the sixth century CE but probably apocryphal, is revealing. In this scripture, the concept of the *tathāgatagarbha* is drawn into the discourse of an original principle underlying both the relative and the absolute aspects in the scheme of twofold reality. An important teaching of the *Awakening of Faith* for the topic at hand is that differentiation, or duality, derives from the unenlightened mind. Providing a description of the different aspects of this mind, the treatise concludes: "Since all things...

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86 The term *tathāgatagarbha* is defined, first, in the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* (Ch. *Dafangdeng rulai zang jing* 大方等如來藏經, T 666.16), a third century text. *Tathāgata*, an epithet referring to the "Thus-come (or gone)-one," is generally used to designate Śākyamuni Buddha in Indian Buddhist texts. In *tathāgatagarbha*, the term basically means "Perfect One," or simply "buddha" (Harvey, 1990: 114). On the other hand, *garbha*, usually meaning "embryo" in Sanskrit, was translated as *ts'ang*, or "womb" (meaning literally "storehouse") in Chinese (Rawlinson, 1983: 260). Since, in the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*, this term is said to be equivalent to *Buddha-dhātu*, in China it came to mean "Buddha-nature," or *fxing* 佛性 (Harvey, 1990: 114). In its turn, *Buddha-dhātu* can also be translated in different ways (see Rawlinson 1983 for a discussion of the ambiguity of those terms). In Chinese indigenous treatises such as the *Awakening of Faith*, the concept of the *tathāgatagarbha* is elaborated upon to become equated with the original, untainted Buddha-nature that exists within all sentient beings. The importance of the development of *tathāgatagarbha* ideas for the Chan tradition is stressed by Faure: "...much of Chan doctrine derives from the Tathāgatagarbha tradition and its speculation on the Buddha-nature...." (Faure, 1993: 147). Such an idea is also confirmed by Sinitic and Korean Buddhism specialist Robert E. Buswell, Jr.'s significant claim that Chan "evolved out of an attempt to elaborate the praxis aspects of Tathāgata-garbha thought" (Buswell, 1989: 10).
87 While the concept of two truths dates back as far as *Abhidharma* writings (see Harvey, 1990: 98), what is at stake for this thesis is how Chinese indigenous writings developed the idea. In the twofold truth theory in Chinese Mahāyāna apocryphal texts, the actions and influence of bodhisattvas in this world are explained in terms of relative truth even though these beings have realized the absolute, undifferentiated nature of reality, where notions of "being" do not make sense.
are, without exception, developed from the mind and produced under the condition of 
deluded thoughts, all differentiations are no other than the differentiations of one’s mind 

Taking this statement to its extreme, one could conclude, in fact, that the 
difference between killing and not killing (and this could be extended to any other 

undifferentiated nature of reality. This stance on absolute reality could be used by Chan 
masters and disciples to justify acts of violence, and it was not held exclusively by this 
school of Buddhism. The development of this idea that is characteristic of Chan and 

Zen Buddhism, however, is that both the relative and absolute aspects of this reality 
would eventually be unified in a rhetorical move to affirm “sudden” enlightenment.

The expression “transcendent immanence” to indicate the merging of the relative 
and absolute aspects of reality denotes a radical association of the realm of sentient beings 
with the absolute, where the transcendent becomes immanent in the phenomenal world. 
Faure explains this complex logic in the following way: “…the desire for transcendence 
turns into a radical immanence, and the soteriological structure elaborated as an expedient 
tends to become an end in itself.” Within the context of ninth- and tenth-century China, 
this radical immanence became the Chan formula of enlightenment. However, scriptures 
are clear on the idea that this scheme is restricted to the highly trained bodhisattva only.

88 *Awakening of Faith*, 52.
89 For example, the Huayan school also held similar beliefs. See Hakeda, 2003: 53. This comes to show 
that, although it claimed to represent a “separate transmission outside the teachings,” Chan Buddhism 
developed its basic ideas within the larger context of Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism. The concerns of early 
adepts of Chan, as Buswell argues in his work on the *Vajrasamādjī-sūtra*, were thus “framed by the same 
controversy then occupying sinitic Buddhist philosophers.” See Buswell, 1989: 125.
90 Faure, 1991: 58
For example, the *Awakening of Faith* describes the different stages of a bodhisattva bringing him or her to realize progressively the insight that reality is non-dual in the following way:

> When they leave the last stage of bodhisattvahood, they will perfect their insight [into Suchness]. When they become free from the ‘activating mind’ they will be free from the perceiving [of duality]. The Dharmakaya of the buddhas knows no such thing as distinguishing this from that.\(^{92}\)

The introduction of this scheme of awakening, in which bodhisattvas are placed beyond conventional truth, nevertheless opens the door for individuals to argue against the necessity of keeping the precepts, since the latter is limited to the relative aspect of reality. What is at first described as an insight restricted to advanced bodhisattvas in the *Awakening of Faith* would become, at least in Japan,\(^{93}\) an insight available to any individual in the scheme of sudden enlightenment.

Another apocryphon, the *Vajrasamādhi*-sūtra (composed during the seventh century),\(^{94}\) provides major clues concerning the practices leading to awakening to one’s pure nature. This scripture treats thoughts and language as discriminatory acts that lead to more delusion about the true nature of reality. Aware of this process and the need for the extinction of the mind, one whose mind has been calmed “knows that all mentality

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\(^{92}\) *Awakening of Faith*, 71.

\(^{93}\) Zen Buddhism scholar Steven Heine offers the following thoughts on the phenomenon: “Antinomianism was an insidious ideology that was perhaps more of a temptation or a threat in the context of Japanese Buddhism, which was dominated by esotericism and eclecticism, than in China, with its moralistic Confucian orientation” (Heine, 2006b: 16). I will address antinomian trends in Chan below.

\(^{94}\) See Buswell’s discussion of authorship, 1989: 170-177, Ch. *Jingang sanmeijing* 金剛三昧經, T 273.9. Note that even though this scripture might have been composed in Korea as Buswell argues, it nevertheless constructed its ideas from the Buddhist tradition brought over by Chinese travelling monks and Korean monks who spent time in China. It also spread quickly in China, which confirms the validity of its ideas for a Chinese audience. Therefore, the *Vajrasamādhi*-sūtra can still be considered as representative of Chinese Buddhism.
and materiality are nothing but the ignorant mind. The discriminations of the ignorant mind differentiate all the dharmas; [all the dharmas] are nothing apart from name and materiality.”

From the point of view of absolute reality, therefore, since dharmas, the building blocks of reality, include the differentiation between right and wrong, this claim seems to entail that, ultimately, there might be no difference between these moral concepts. This idea offers similarities to a poem attributed to Sengcan (d. 606), putative third Chan patriarch: “Be not concerned with right and wrong; The conflict between right and wrong; Is the sickness of the mind.” This idea of the ultimate non-duality of right and wrong, therefore, may have helped to pave the way for a logic that would lead to the justification of precept-breaking behaviour such as killing.

In light of such ideas, is one to conclude that the enlightened one is beyond the necessity to act morally in Chinese indigenous writings? On one hand, the Vajrasamādhi-sūtra teaches that bodhisattvas who have peeked into their original nature (the tathāgatagarbha) are freed from having to follow the precepts. The Buddha is said to express such an idea in the following line: “One who cultivates the dharma of voidness does not base himself on the three realms of existence and does not linger over the specific practices of the Vinaya.” In this same sūtra, however, we also learn that the reason why one who has achieved this state does not need to follow the precepts is

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95 Vajrasamādhi-sūtra, 237.
96 In Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 204.
97 Vajrasamādhi-sūtra, 193. Such treatment of the Vinaya makes it hardly a coincidence that the person who wrote the first commentaries to this scripture is Wŏnhyo (617-686), a Korean Buddhist known for his precept-breaking behaviour such as frequenting brothels (Faure, 1991: 233).
because he or she will automatically respect them. This is clearly stated in the following passage:

...while he (the one who perceives the non-duality of mind and objects) does not wear the dharma-robes and neither observes all the Pratimoksa precepts [monk’s disciplinary rules] nor participates in the Posada [fortnightly religious observations], he does not engage in personal licentiousness in his own mind and obtains the fruition of sainthood.98

Although this statement rejects any justification for bodhisattvas to fall back into a state of licentiousness, it may nevertheless be interesting to compare this view with the types of justifications monks used to justify a certain moral laxity. In the section below, however, I demonstrate that the idea that practice is unnecessary has led, in some cases, to antinomian behaviour.

1.2. The Rhetoric of Emptiness and Antinomian Behaviour

Before addressing the involvement of Buddhists in violent actions from the historical perspective, it is pertinent to give attention to the ways in which the doctrine of transcendent immanence was used to justify other types of morally lax actions. This merging of the “two truths” of reality does lead to the hypothetical situation in which an individual, having claimed enlightenment, can kill an individual and argue that, ultimately, it does not go against any precept (since there are no such things as precepts or, as a matter of fact, no one to kill or to be killed in absolute reality). However, the next step is to verify the occurrence of such an attitude in Chan and Zen history. The non-dual attainment of the bodhisattva was sometimes presented by scriptures as allowing certain

98Vajrasamāthi-sūtra, 220.
acts that would usually be judged as going against the precept of non-killing. In the *Treatise on the Transcendence of Cognition*, a Chan text found at Dunhuang, probably dating from the eighth century,\(^9\) one can find the following revealing lines:

Ne peut-on pas, dans certaines conditions, tuer un être vivant? Le feu de brousse brûle la montagne; l'ouragan brise les arbres; la falaise qui s'écroule écrase les bêtes sauvages; le torrent qui s'écoule noie les insectes. L'homme qui rend son esprit pareil [à ces forces de la nature] est en droit d'en faire autant. Mais, s'il éprouve la moindre hésitation, s'il [s'imagine] 'voir' un être vivant [dans l'objet de son acte], 'voir' un meutre [dans son acte], s'il lui reste la moindre pensée [non dépersonalisée], alors, ne tuât-il qu'une fourmi, il se trouve lié par cet acte 業 (*karman*), dans lequel sa vie est impliquée.\(^{10}\)

In this passage, as nature is sometimes violent, so is the adept who has achieved a perfect reflection of the myriad things. However, the author of this passage is careful to note that any failure to remain in this state of non-thinking can actually bring serious consequences upon one's karmic account. Nevertheless, the line between killing and non-killing here is still fine, even though this awakened individual may only represent a theoretical ideal.

This is what has led Brian Daizen Victoria, Sōtō Zen priest and Buddhist scholar, to argue, referring to the treatise mentioned above, that "[t]his antinomian license to kill with moral impunity is the most dangerous, and deadly, of Chan’s many ‘insights.’"\(^{101}\) Individuals failing to grasp the theoretical aspect of this ideal, in fact, can easily use it to legitimate

\(^9\) For the different editions of this treatise, see Demiéville, 1957: 296, fn. 3. (Ch. Jueguan lun 結觀論).

\(^{10}\) Demiéville, 1957: 296, fn. 3. This passage is all the more interesting in light of Deshimaru’s argument that one who practices *zazen* becomes in harmony with nature (see chapter four).

\(^{101}\) Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 204.
violence. From this view of nature's violence as a model, the meaning of the word "naturalist" heresy\(^{102}\) takes on a whole new dimension.

An example of the criticism that illustrates this phenomenon comes from Chinese Song monk Puan Yinsu (1115-1169), whose statement is also quoted by Obaku Zen master Chōon Dōkai (1630-1682): "And today there is an empty-minded Zen school, people who, without having the proper awakening, explain that to drink wine or eat meat, and to commit adultery is no obstacle for the enlightened nature."\(^{103}\) It thus seems that, justifying themselves with the rhetoric of original enlightenment, individuals have rejected precepts such as celibacy and the prohibition against drinking. Daoji (d.1209), a Song Chan master, shows this trend. It is said, in fact, that this individual elevated "...hedonistic values as a social ideal;" he ate meat, drank intoxicating beverages, gambled, and stole.\(^{104}\) This type of behaviour, or "naturalist" tendency, was thus a real phenomenon in Chinese Buddhism. In Japan, the group calling itself Darumashū, or Bodhidharma’s followers, held the opinion that since one’s mind is already enlightened, one does not need to keep any precept or follow any practice.\(^{105}\) Such justifications for

\(^{102}\) Term used to qualify groups who engaged in antinomian behaviour. See Faure, 1991:59.

\(^{103}\) Faure, 1991: 236.


\(^{105}\) On this topic, William Bodiford explains: "Exactly how the precepts were rejected is unclear, but one Darumashū text asserted that the purpose of the precepts lies only in controlling the active mind. Therefore, when one attains no-mind (mushin) all precepts are left behind" (Bodiford, 1993: 168). While groups like the Darumashū advocated a rejection of the precepts from an ideological basis, other sects actually used violence in order to attain awakening. A potent example is the killing of animals by contemporaries of Linji Yixuan (d. 866), apparently "to demonstrate the mortal danger of any duality" (Demieville, 1957: 296. My translation) Barend ter Haar, in an article on the Chan practices of the Yongzheng emperor (1678-1753), addresses the regular beatings of monks during sitting sessions in such a way that they are said to be "beaten into enlightenment" (Ter Haar, 2008: 17). This practice, in fact, has been a popular one in the Rinzai (ch. Linji) sect of Zen Buddhism, and corresponds with the austere, sometimes aggressive character of its founder. Here the act of violence, harming other sentient beings (animals or monks), is achieved by a presumably enlightened one (master) but on the premise that this practice will help.
breaking the precepts and the unnecessary nature of practice demonstrate that it directly
developed from the greater Sinitic context out of which Chan (and then Zen) came.

The above exploration shows that the ultimate emptiness of the precepts,
developed from ideas found in Chinese indigenous writings, was used to justify
antinomian behaviour. Once the concept of an immanent Buddha-nature was asserted,
and the line between the relative and ultimate realities collapsed through the rhetoric of
“sudden” awakening, the act of killing, among other precept-breaking actions, potentially
lost its negative karmic connotation. However, it is still fair to ask whether this logic
extended to the general legitimatizing of physical violence. In order to address the
historical aspect of Buddhist involvement in violent acts, it is necessary to go back to
another dimension of the phenomenon, namely its socio-political factors.

1.3. Chan/Buddhist Violence in History

The involvement of Chinese Buddhist monks in armed conflicts goes back to the
Jin (317-420) and Wei (386-534) dynastic periods. In Japan, ever since its introduction to
the country, Buddhism was characterized by a close relation to state power. This can be
seen, for example, in the early use of rituals and sūtras as technologies for the welfare of
the state during the Nara period (710-794)\textsuperscript{106} and later the integration of the Buddhist
Law (buppō 仏法) and the Imperial Law (ōbō 王法).\textsuperscript{107} In other words, by receiving
privileges such as exemption from taxes and access to land, Buddhist monks were

\textsuperscript{106} See, for example, Grappard, 2000: 79-80.
\textsuperscript{107} See Kuroda, 1996: 276-284.
expected to help rulers in the maintenance of the state, and such help sometimes extended to the warding off of enemy troops.

Buddhist monks’ participation in armed conflict was not always physical, however, and it can be argued that one of the main involvements of monks in early Chinese conflicts was through ritual. This role is described by the indigenous scripture entitled Scripture for the Humane Kings, the self-proclaimed purpose of which is the protection of the state. For example, it presents a ritual to be observed in times of difficulties, and then encourages its use in the following manner: “If, in coming ages, all the kings of states, and others, should desire to protect the state or to protect themselves, then they should likewise receive and hold, read, recite, and expound this scripture.” While this involvement was not necessarily physical, the simple act of assisting rulers in their military expeditions through supernatural powers such as foresight still involves participation in armed conflicts.

Besides the ritualistic assistance of monks in wars, scholars have gathered evidence pertaining to their physical participation in armed conflicts as early as the fifth century. An important instance of a Chan group involved in warfare is the association of the Shaolin monastery with the future Tang emperor Li Shimin (599-649). The armed group, in fact, played a key role in the battle that won the future emperor his reign. In

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109 Scripture for the Humane Kings, 245-246.
110 Scripture for the Humane Kings, 249.
111 This is presented by Sinologist Tsukamoto Zenryu’s (1898-1980) list of nine major Buddhist rebellions between 402 and 517 (in Gernet, 1956: 278). In terms of monks involved in emperors’ armed conflicts, J.J.M. De Groot cites many cases in which individual monks became known for their military skills (De Groot, 1967: 103-109). For example, Wei emperor Xiao Wu Di (r. 532-535) had a monk-general who carried weapons with him (De Groot, 1967: 104).
this battle, the monks occupied a strategic point against former Sui general Wang Shichong (d.621).\textsuperscript{112} While the monks of Mount Song, where the monastery was situated, refused the military titles offered, this event nevertheless anticipates the future martial training of the Shaolin monastery.\textsuperscript{113} The fact that Li Shimin, posthumously Taizong, imposed the secularization of most Buddhist monks and nuns (Shaolin monks were excepted)\textsuperscript{114} after his victory also reveals the type of threat that Buddhist groups presented for emperors. In fact, this edict illustrates the phenomenon of monastic groups as large bodies of individuals ready to side with the party most likely to further their interests.\textsuperscript{115} Hence, pioneer French Sinologist Paul Demiéville writes in “Le Bouddhisme et la guerre”: “C’est un fait significatif que, dans l’histoire de Chine, la question du


\textsuperscript{113} Indeed, Shahar demonstrates that the involvement of Shaolin-affiliated monks in warfare was more related to factors such as economic power and geopolitical location. For example, the first recorded instance of Shaolin monks fighting an enemy was during the Sui dynasty (ca. 610), and it consisted in the defense of the monastery’s wealth against bandits (2008: 21). Furthermore, the Shaolin involvement with Li Shimin was deeply connected to the monastery’s strategic location for the defeat of Wang Shichong’s army (2008: 23-24). However, only in the late Ming period (1368-1644), Shahar argues, did Shaolin martial arts become systematized (2008: 55-56).

\textsuperscript{114} Demiéville, 1957: 275.

\textsuperscript{115} There are many other examples of armed monastic bodies. For example, the Song dynasty (960-1279) saw the participation of monks fighting the Northern Jurchen of the Jin dynasty (See De Groot, 1967: 105, and Hirata, 1994: 7). The Ming dynasty represents an interesting period for the topic of this paper, since it is during the later part of this period that scholars have found concrete evidence of the systematized use of martial arts by monks from the Shaolin temple and other temples as well. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in fact, there are no less than forty sources directly mentioning the martial art training and involvement of monks in various military events (Shahar, 2001: 364). These sources, mostly written by Chinese literati figures and imperial generals, reveal the close association between the government and the Buddhist community. Reflecting on general Yu Dayou’s (1503-1579) account of Shaolin monks’ training, Shahar notes: “His conception of their monastery as a military institution enriches our understanding of the multifarious roles that Buddhism played in late-Ming society” (Shahar, 2001: 377). During this period, monks also engaged in military campaigns against Japanese pirates attacking the Jiangnan coast. Literary evidence shows, on one hand, the admiration of generals for Shaolin monks’ military abilities, and, on the other, the fear that the same monks could become a threat if they decided to turn their military skills against the government (Shahar, 2001: 384-386). With those late-Ming testimonies, we thus obtain a picture of at least some Chinese monks participating in warfare directly with their fists, staffs, and spears.
service militaire des moines bouddhistes ne s’est pas posée en termes idéologiques, mais en termes économiques.\textsuperscript{116}

Martial arts training for Buddhist monks was further pursued in Japan, and, once in that country, took a life of its own by being integrated in the training and life of the Japanese warrior class of the Kamakura period (1185-1333). It is relevant to note, on this subject, that one of Eisai’s (1141-1215) first major treatises was entitled “Treatise on the Spread of Zen for the Protection of the Nation.”\textsuperscript{117} Following similar patterns it had first created in China (and previously in India), Buddhism in Japan presented itself as able to protect the state by different means, both occult and physical. At the level of doctrine, Faure argues that “…the theory of ‘innate awakening’ (J. hongaku shisō) was one of the main theoretical justifications for the changes that took place in medieval Japanese monasteries and that allowed, among other things, the emergence of the so-called warrior-monks (sōhei).”\textsuperscript{118} However, this approach to doctrine as producing a certain historical phenomenon would not be complete without attention to the context in which the relation between martial training and Zen developed in Japan. While in China, Shaolin martial training has been attributed to the violence surrounding the monastery, it seems that in Kamakura Japan, Zen martial teachings were specifically adopted by warriors out of a recognition of their value for the warrior mentality.

Significant figures in the process of adopting Zen for martial training purposes were powerful Kamakura regents such as Hōjō Tokiyori (1227-1263) and Hōjō Tokikume

\textsuperscript{116} Demiéville, 1957: 268-269.
\textsuperscript{117} King, 1993: 33.
\textsuperscript{118} Faure, 1991: 231. It is interesting to place this comment in light of the above discussion concerning early Chan articulations of radical immanence.
(1251-1284), who sought in Zen a way of dealing with Mongol invasions.\textsuperscript{119} It is thus only in the thirteenth century that Zen actually became the preferred religion of warriors, which in turn developed into an integral training. The appeal of Zen Buddhism for the warrior is described later by Zen master Takuan Sohō (1573-1645), who is often cited as having popularized the idea of no-mind (J. mushin 無心) as relevant for martial training.\textsuperscript{120} In the post-Tokugawa era, Zen Buddhists revived this idea to lend at least their rhetorical support to the aggressive nationalistic activities of the imperial system. In doing so, they made clear that Zen doctrine was particularly well-fitted to help the nation succeed in its endeavours.

1.4. Zen and Violence in the Post-Meiji: Using Doctrine to Justify Violence

In nineteenth- and twentieth-century Japan, Zen Buddhist individuals participated in war activities by providing rhetoric to justify the killing of one’s enemies on the battlefield. At play in this phenomenon is the combination of the doctrinal ideas of the emptiness of killing, along with socio-political motivations to support the nationalistic endeavors of Japan.\textsuperscript{121} One example from Rinzai priest Sōen Shaku will suffice to illustrate that trend.\textsuperscript{122} In fact, using Sōen as the main example is especially appropriate since he was considered “the greatest Rinzai Zen master of his day”\textsuperscript{123} and also because

\textsuperscript{119} Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 215.
\textsuperscript{120} Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 216.
\textsuperscript{121} For a discussion of the factors leading to the association of Zen Buddhist rhetoric with Japanese nationalism, see chapter two.
\textsuperscript{122} This is the same Sōen who participated in the spread of Zen in America (see introduction). Other examples of formulations of the Buddhist pro-war rhetoric from different individuals can be found in Victoria 2003; 1997 [2006]; Ketelaar 1990; Sharf 1993; 1995a; 1995c; and Ienaga 1978.
\textsuperscript{123} Victoria, 2003: 112.
he was the master of D.T. Suzuki, whose writings greatly influenced the image of Zen projected to the rest of the world. In a response to Russian pacifist Tolstoi enjoining him to condemn the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the priest replied:

Even though the Buddha forbade the taking of life, he also taught that until all sentient beings are united together through the exercise of infinite compassion, there will never be peace. Therefore, as a means of bringing into harmony those things which are incompatible, killing and war are necessary.  

Although this does not mean that Sōen took lives himself, it is easy to see how this rhetorical form of violence becomes physical when adopted by the military. Indeed, one could argue that it is much easier to kill when convinced that this act is approved by religious authorities. Through a certain interpretation of Buddhist philosophy, other individuals went so far as to argue, referring to the emptiness of the precepts, that this use of violence was not breaking any precept. Although such a brief portrait of Buddhist individuals engaged in pro-war rhetoric does not do justice to the complexities of their views and arguments, it nevertheless shows that some Zen Buddhist priests did not oppose the state’s expansionist goals and the violent means used to attain them.

The pro-war rhetoric of Zen Buddhist individuals, starting in the Meiji, thus presented new elements advancing Zen as the proper religion for military and nationalistic purposes. First, the idea that the Japanese hold the only genuine form of

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125 Note, however, that he went to the battlefield as a Buddhist chaplain during the Russo-Japanese War, a time during which he wrote the following: "... I also wished to inspire, if I could, our valiant soldiers with the ennobling thoughts of the Buddha, so as to enable them to die on the battlefield with the confidence that the task in which they are engaged is great and noble" (quoted in Victoria 1997 [2006]: 26). His words therefore encouraged the taking of lives by reminding the soldiers of the importance of their task.
126 See chapter two for a discussion of Sawaki Kōdō, Deshimaru’s master, and his pro-war rhetoric affirming that “Whether one kills or does not kill, the precept forbidding killing [is preserved]” (cited in Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 36).
Buddhism can be seen as fitting nicely with the expansionist character of Japan in the modern period. The following statement by a leading scholar of religion, Anesaki Masaharu (1873-1949), shows the sentiment that Japan, in its expansion into other Buddhist countries, carried a “spiritual burden,” not unlike the infamous “white man’s burden” that justified the European colonial enterprise earlier. He expressed his view in 1899 as follows: “Our Nation (Japan) is the only true Buddhist nation of all the nations in the world. It is thus upon the shoulders of this nation that the responsibility for the unification of Eastern and Western thought and the continued advancement of the East falls.”127 Although this is not a direct exhortation to invade other Asian countries, again, one cannot underestimate the power of religious authorities when they speak in times of turmoil, political or other.

Some proponents of Zen Buddhism in the Meiji years and beyond also extrapolated on the idea of “true Buddhism” to present Zen as the ultimate expression of the Asian spirit. For example, D.T. Suzuki’s “Oriental Oneness”128 illustrates this trend. Another important contribution of Zen Buddhists to the pro-war rhetoric is their strong association between Zen and Bushidō (武士道 “Warrior’s Way”). Sōen can be quoted once more here, as he wrote in 1919 that “The power that comes from Zen training can be called forth to become military power, good government, and the like.”129 Later, in the midst of the Fifteen-Year War, Suzuki again defended this association, arguing that “The soldierly quality, with its mysticism and aloofness from worldly affairs, appeals to the

will-power. Zen in this respect walks hand in hand with the spirit of *Bushidō*..."\(^{130}\)

Such a vision of Zen shows a willingness to support the state’s endeavours in, first, expanding into Asia, and second, waging a fully-fledged war against the Allied Forces.

Finally, concerning the Buddhist involvement in the efforts leading to the Fifteen-Year War, rhetoric was only one of the different approaches used by Buddhist priests. Scholars have argued that from “the 1920s to the early 1940s,” Buddhist priests:

> lent their social status and homiletical skills to propaganda campaigns (*kyōka undō* 強化運動) run by the state to cultivate obedient imperial subjects, organized and/or participated actively in patriotic groups, exhorted parishioners to “serve the public” (*hōkoku takuhatsu gongyō* 報国托鉢勤行), donated temple funds for the construction of warplanes, ran officer-training programs, performed ceremonies and chanted sūtras to promote Japanese victory, assisted the families of the war dead, served as chaplains for troops fighting overseas, and helped “pacify” (*senbu* 宣撫) occupied and colonized areas and mold colonized Asians into imperial subjects (*kōminka* 皇民化).\(^{131}\)

In contrast to this support for the nation’s war, many post-war Buddhist individuals have criticized the involvement of the sects in war activities. Notable in this endeavour are individuals such as Rinzai sect affiliated professor Ichikawa Hakugen (1902-1986) and Sōtō Zen scholars Hakayama Noriaki (b. 1943) and Matsumoto Shirō (b. 1950).\(^{132}\)

Crucial to this criticism is the idea that Zen should regain the realm of ethical teachings and get away from the idea that good and evil are mere illusions. The following section

\(^{130}\) Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 106.

\(^{131}\) Ives, 2001: 16. The references given for this passage are Kashiwahara 1990; Yoshida 1970; and Victoria, 1997 [2006].

\(^{132}\) For a discussion of their ideas and other individuals criticizing their sect’s involvement in the war, see Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 157-181, and discussion below.
will address some of this criticism, along with modern voices in the articulation of Zen Buddhist ethics, and of Zen Buddhist nonviolence more specifically.

2. Modern Considerations of Zen and Nonviolence

2.1. Criticism of Zen and Violence

The post-war years in Japan saw the emergence of criticism of the Zen sects' involvement in nationalistic war activities. Although a full account of the nature of this criticism is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is important to address its main ideas in order to introduce the development of Zen Buddhist nonviolent thought. A notable Japanese individual who tackled the issue of Buddhist war involvement is Ichikawa, whose work outlines not only how Zen Buddhist sects became allies of the status quo in Japan, but also explains how they can change and become ethical agents in the socio-political realm. Rather than associating Zen religious freedom with freedom from morality, he argues that such freedom must connect with socio-political freedom, an act that allows criticism of political powers. For Ichikawa, therefore, the compliance of the Zen sects during the war is an act that must be denounced and apologized for. Furthermore, through this process Zen thought must be reformed in such a way as to avoid repeating these mistakes.

In a similar vein, scholarship in English has also criticized Zen sects for their actions during the war. In this domain, Victoria stands out with his *Zen at War*, a work documenting many Zen Buddhists' pro-war attitudes and acts. In the second edition of

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133 See Ives, 1992: 90-94.
134 Ives, 1992: 94.
his work, he added a chapter documenting Zen violence and political compliance historically.\textsuperscript{135} He presents these historical developments as a first step toward creating a peaceful religion. For Victoria, peaceful, or nonviolent Buddhism is an original state of the tradition that must be regained, not created, an assumption contained in the following question he asks his readership: “How is the Zen school to be restored and reconnected to its Buddhist roots?”\textsuperscript{136} Along with his criticism is thus a latent belief in the essentially peaceful core of the Zen tradition that has been buried under historical circumstances.

For Victoria, identifying the elements that contributed to the association of Zen Buddhism with nationalism and militarism, therefore, will eventually lead to avoiding them in the future.\textsuperscript{137}

Another important academic contribution to the criticism of Zen Buddhist sects during the war years and those leading to them is Sharf’s analysis of Zen nationalism. In his argument, the rhetoric that posits Zen as free from any historical circumstances has led to a disconnection from “traditional Buddhist soteriological, cosmological, and ethical concerns.”\textsuperscript{138} By presenting a “pure” Zen, as it were, Zen intellectuals neglected important aspects of the tradition. Particularly relevant for the topic at hand is the neglect of ethical concerns. Furthermore, the articulation of an essential Zen beyond cultural differences, as expressed by individuals such as D.T. Suzuki, participated in the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item\textsuperscript{135} Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 192-231.
  \item\textsuperscript{136} Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 231.
  \item\textsuperscript{137} Victoria adopts a more active stance in an article where he criticizes Zen groups in the post war years. He argues: “Yet today’s Engaged Buddhists may nevertheless end up contributing indirectly to bloodletting by not actively campaigning for a Buddhist morality that firmly opposes it, instead basing their moral stance on teachings going back, in the case of Zen, no further than Dharma ancestors deeply indebted to their military, samurai or imperial patrons” (2001: 87).
  \item\textsuperscript{138} Sharf, 1995c: 43.
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establishment of an Asian hegemonic discourse. Although the idea of a pan-religious experience appealed to many in the West, Sharf offers the following warning:

But impatience with plurality and uncertainty in the intellectual realm can lead all too readily to impatience with plurality and uncertainty in the realm of politics. It may not be mere coincidence that a surprising number of those who saw Zen as a solution to spiritual anxiety were drawn to authoritarian or totalitarian solutions to social and political unrest. 139

While such a statement necessitates a more in-depth study of the relation between non-dualistic worldviews (whether religious or philosophical) and totalitarianism, the point is well taken. It is also a particularly interesting observation in light of some of the recent articulations of Zen Buddhist ethics, which I address below.

Criticism about Zen Buddhist sects, therefore, comes from different perspectives: Japanese, non-Japanese, Buddhist, and non-Buddhist. Following this trend, in the post-war years, attempts to articulate a Zen ethic has emerged. Indeed, Zen Buddhism is often accused of failing to establish a definition of good and evil that would then foster ethical guidelines to follow. Christopher Ives, who has written extensively on Zen ethics, and in particular those of the Rinzai tradition, claims:

In promoting its soteriological aims by emphasizing the need to ‘transcend’ distinctions between good and evil, Zen often gives the impression that one leaves such distinctions in the dust, never to enter again into consideration of what might be good and evil. In short, the tradition has yet to articulate sufficiently how one returns to ‘good’ and ‘evil’ and regrasps the realm of ethics. 140

As a response to criticism of this kind, both Japanese and Western scholars have formulated ways of relating Zen to ethical thinking. In Japan, for instance, Hisamatsu

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139 Sharf, 1995c: 50.
140 Ives, 1992: 47.
Shin’ichi (1889-1980) and his student Abe Masao (1915-2006) wrote extensively on how to articulate ethical action from a Zen perspective. For Hisamatsu, founder of the FAS Society, Zen awakening was “the basis for genuine action in the world... and in history..., the arenas of social ethics.” His society, in fact, is an organization that strives to act upon Hisamatsu’s articulation of a Zen social ethic. In Abe’s writings about ethics, an important point is his treatment of good and evil, categories deemed important for guiding one’s behaviour. He wrote: “...Buddhist ethical life is established in light of prajñā (wisdom) and karunā (compassion) where, without the distinction of good and evil, the distinction is clearly realized.” His view is thus faithful to a Zen Buddhist rejection of the categories of good and evil, but it paradoxically includes these categories by transcending them. The importance of compassion, furthermore, is related to the bodhisattva’s vow to help all sentient beings.

Many voices that have participated in the formulation of Zen Buddhist ethics also come from the Western perspective. One of the main proponents of the movement is Robert Aitken. The fact that his Mind of Clover: Essays in Zen Buddhist Ethics (1984) is cited as a source in Zen Buddhist ethics in two main works on the topic attests to the widespread importance of his writings in the West. It is in this work that Aitken interprets and teaches the ethical meaning of the precepts and other concepts such as the bodhisattva vows, interdependence, and emptiness. The Buddhist precepts that are

141 According to Abe, FAS is an acronym of the following: “F” standing for “awakening to the formless self,” “A” for “standing on the standpoint of all humankind,” and finally “S” for “creating history suprahistorically” (Abe, 2003: 30).
142 Ives, 1992: 75.
143 In Ives, 1992: 87.
144 For example, on Buddhist ethics, see Harvey 2000: 71, 74-75, 82, 143-144, and on Zen Buddhist ethics, Ives 1992: 37-38, 55, 97, 118.
important for the Diamond Sangha, the Zen group founded by Aitken, are Sōtō Zen sect founder Dōgen's (1200-1253) sixteen bodhisattva precepts: "The Three Vows of Refuge," "The Three Pure Precepts," and "The Ten Grave Precepts." Concerning the way in which one ought to understand the precepts, Aitken is critical of the Zen Buddhist tradition, noting that "[t]hough Mahayana Buddhism ... teaches the innate value of each being and the essential harmony of the universe, we find the Precepts of the Buddha treated metaphysically rather than practically in the Zen tradition." His presentation of the precepts, therefore, seems to be aimed at applying them more literally, in such a way as to turn them into ethical guidelines to be adopted by the followers. Such an endeavour materialized in The Mind of Clover, which was purportedly compiled to "clarify [the precepts] for Western students of Buddhism as a way to help make Buddhism a daily practice."

Another notable Western work focusing on the articulation of Zen Buddhist ethical teachings is Invoking Reality: Moral and Ethical Teachings of Zen (2007), written by John Daido Loori (b. 1930), founder of the Mountains and Rivers Order in the United States. This work emphasizes the importance of considering the sixteen precepts as ethical teachings in Zen practice. A major concern here is to counter an interpretation of Zen Buddhist practice as non-ethical or unethical, as well as to take some distance

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146 Aitken, 1993: xvi-xvii. This criticism can also be found in different works on Buddhist ethics. For example, Ives writes: "Eisai and Dōgen made general statements about promoting the good and avoiding evil, yet they offered little in the way of an explicit definition of what might be good overall" (1992: 64).
147 Aitken, 1984: 3.
148 For example, he writes: "In essence, the precepts are a definition of the life of a Buddha, of how a Buddha functions in the world. They are how enlightened beings live their lives, relate to other human beings, make moral and ethical decisions, manifest wisdom and compassion in everyday life" (Loori, 2007: 2).
from what has been called “wild Zen.” In fact, the first sentence of Loori’s work is as follows:

When Zen arrived and began to take root in this country, there arose a misconception about the role of morality and ethics in the practice of the Buddha-Dharma. Statements that Zen was beyond morality or that Zen was amoral were made by distinguished writers on Buddhism, and people assumed that this was correct. 149

In such a work, therefore, the militaristic Japanese Zen is not the first reason mentioned as the cause for the need to establish a Zen Buddhist ethic, but rather an antinomian understanding of Zen popularized in the sixties. As a matter of fact, the way in which Zen Buddhism was understood by certain communities in the United States was also a concern for Aitken, who was often teaching to a group he called the “New Age people,” consisting of free-spirited individuals living on the beaches of Maui as an escape from the status quo in the late sixties and early seventies. 150 While letting such a clientele frequent his zendō, he still sought to avoid teaching a Zen Buddhism that justified antinomian behaviour, not differentiating between right and wrong. This view was typical of “Beat Zen anarchists,” who held that “in the falling away of body and mind, in the realization of life, all belief systems have to go; correct behaviour will then arise spontaneously, rendering ethical systems obsolete.” 151 Aitken’s work can thus be seen as a corrective for a certain type of Zen he considered threatening for the precepts and ethical life in general. 152

152 Other writers have expressed similar concerns with the ethical orientation of Zen in America. For example, Nattier writes: “… in Zen circles recent scandals have led to a new interest in the cultivation of the Buddhist moral precepts” (1998: 194). Victoria is also critical of certain American teachers and their
Along with a reaction to the militaristic aspect of Zen Buddhist rhetoric before and during the war years, therefore, a concern with the ways in which Zen was understood and practiced in the West became a motivation for Zen teachers to articulate a Zen Buddhist ethic. Western scholarship on the topic also attests to this phenomenon, breaking the trend of research on Zen "dominated by philosophical and theological interests focused on the soteriological significance or religious awakening and related studies in intellectual history."\textsuperscript{153} Notable in such endeavour are Christopher Ives' \textit{Zen Awakening and Society} (1992) and Philip Olson's \textit{The Discipline of Freedom: A Kantian View of the Role of Moral Precepts in Zen Practice} (1993).\textsuperscript{154} In the first work, Ives attempts to trace Rinzai Zen theoretical and historical developments that led to the nationalistic and militaristic rhetoric of the Zen discourse in the Meiji period. He then presents some of the recent developments in Japanese ethical thinking, including the works of Hisamatsu, Abe, and Ichikawa, and takes on the challenge of proposing some basic guidelines for the articulation of a Zen Buddhist ethic relevant for postmodernity.\textsuperscript{155} On the other hand, Olson’s work is concerned with applying the teachings of Suzuki Shunryū (1904-1971), the Sōtō Zen Japanese master who founded the San Francisco Zen discourses. He reproaches Zen Peacemakers’ founder Bernie Glassman (b. 1939) his apologetic attitude toward Yasutani Hakuun, one of the Zen masters who participated in nationalistic pro-war rhetoric of his time (2001: 88). Victoria also deplores Philip Kapleau’s rhetoric, quoting the founder of Rochester Zen Center’s lines: "If the act [of killing] were done no-mindedly, beyond self-conscious awareness of one taking life and a life being taken, no painful karma would be incurred, for in the profoundest sense there would be no killer and nothing killed. Let me hasten to add that only a highly developed individual could act in this way" (quoted in Victoria, 2001: 84).

\textsuperscript{153} Unno, 1999: 509.

\textsuperscript{154} Other academic works that treat Buddhist ethics but do not focus specifically on Zen are Damien Keown’s \textit{The Nature of Buddhist Ethics} (1992 [2001]), a work edited by Prebish entitled \textit{Buddhist Ethics: A Cross-Cultural Approach} (1992) (in which one can find an essay by James Whitehill called "Is There a Zen Ethics?"); and a volume edited by Keown, Prebish, and Husted entitled \textit{Buddhism and Human Rights} (1998).

\textsuperscript{155} Unno, 1999: 526 (see also Ives 1992).
Center and Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, to a Kantian approach to morality.

According to Olson,

... when Suzuki and others talk about the practice of *zazen* as free from goal-oriented thinking or dualistic notions of good and evil, they are referring to the noumenal unconditional basis of the moral life, which is not subject to the relative, conventional, and therefore unreliable terms of the phenomenal world.\(^{156}\)

Olson thus decries the association between Zen non-dualistic thinking, as sought in the practice of *zazen*, and antinomian behaviour. In this work, furthermore, Olson seeks "... to develop a theoretical basis for criticizing the practice of 'wild' Zen Buddhism in America by conducting a philosophical inquiry into the fundamental principles of Zen practice."\(^{157}\) Both Ives and Olson, therefore, offer strategies to rethink Zen Buddhist ethics and articulate them for a modern Western audience. In the following section, I address a particular aspect of such ethics, the concern with nonviolence.

### 2.2. Zen Nonviolence

Within these modern efforts to criticize the association of Zen sects with militaristic endeavours and to articulate a Zen ethical system, an important aspect of the Buddhist tradition is its nonviolent orientation.\(^{158}\) Two major trends which Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist scholars point out to articulate Zen Buddhist nonviolence are the bodhisattva precepts and the worldview of interdependence. In the West, such a concern

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\(^{156}\) In Unno, 1999: 520.

\(^{157}\) Olson, 1993: xiii.

\(^{158}\) Different styles of Mahāyāna Buddhist ethics are provided in Queen 2000 and divided into four categories: discipline, virtue, altruism, and engagement (11).
has often been approached within the larger context of so-called “engaged Buddhism,” and most literature on the topic belongs to this larger category. In this section, I present some major trends of thinking about Zen nonviolence. Since my focus is on a Zen Buddhist community in Canada, I will provide concrete examples of Buddhist communities in the West that try to embody such principles in different ways.

Sōtō Zen Buddhist practitioners normally adopt the sixteen bodhisattva precepts presented by Dōgen in the “Jukai” chapter of his Shōbōgenzō. First among these precepts is the prohibition against killing, “which for many is the cardinal tenet of Buddhist ethics.” This precept, for some Buddhists, justifies a pacifist stance in conflicts, whether personal or political. Prominent Buddhist leaders of the twentieth century such as the Dalai Lama or Thich Nhat Hanh cite not-killing as fundamental in their pacifist stance toward their opponents. For example, the latter affirms: “I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to condone any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, and in my way of life.” In a similar vein, Sōtō sect-affiliated scholar Taigen Dan Leighton argues, speaking of the bodhisattva precepts: “First is the primary precept of not killing, but instead supporting life. This can and should be applied to a Buddhist

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159 For a definition of the category of engaged Buddhism, see introduction.
160 Rothberg, 1992: 49. This prohibition is the first of the ten serious prohibitions, which are the same as the ten grave precepts of the Fanwang jing (Bodiford, 1993: 170). Besides the ten prohibitions, the two other categories are the three devotions (the three refuges) and the three pure precepts (see Shōbōgenzō, 311-313). On the order of the precepts, Bodiford notes: “The first precept in the Ssu-fen lü is for the monk to control his own sexuality (i.e., self-control), whereas the first precept in the Fanwang ching forbids the killing of all sentient beings (i.e., saving others)” (1993: 165). The Sifen lü 四分律, or Four-part Vinaya (Jp. Shibunritsu), is a monastic code attributed to the Indian Dharmaguptaka school, and was used for ordination in Chinese Buddhism when Dōgen visited China (Bodiford, 1993: 164).
response to the policies of our political and corporate rulers." In such an approach to
the precept, therefore, a literal prohibition against killing is at stake, justifying a
nonviolent stance for Zen Buddhism.

A major protagonist of the association of Zen Buddhism and peace in the West,
Robert Aitken, presents the same precept as follows: "[t]he First Precept plainly means
'Don’t kill,’ but it also expresses social concern: ‘Let us encourage life,’ and it relates to
the mind: ‘There is no thought of killing.' Analyzing this sentence, he establishes a
parallel between the literal view of not killing and the Jain strict adherence to ahimsā. He
relates the second exhortation, to encourage life, to the bodhisattva’s compassionate
action of saving all beings. On the topic of war and political conflict, Aitken also stresses
what he considers the impossibility of a just war theory from the Zen perspective. Such a
theory, he argues, goes against the literal interpretation of the precept, and therefore
cannot be accepted. Furthermore, although Aitken’s precept-adhering individual is

163 As opposed to an approach to the precepts as a ritual, or empty and therefore not binding. For example, Bodiford argues that “When the bodhisattva precepts and Tendai monastic rules were interpreted in terms of medieval Tendai doctrines of inherent enlightenment (hongaku hōmon), the evil conduct that the precepts were meant to control could be reduced to a mere dualistic abstraction” (1993: 167). See also discussion in section one of the present chapter.
164 Concerning Zen Buddhism and nonviolence, Robert Aitken’s thinking and actions represent one of the most elaborate attempts at articulating a “Zen” ethical teaching in North America. In terms of writing, The Mind of Clover is his main work on the ethical meaning of the precepts and other concepts such as the bodhisattva vows or interdependence. Aitken’s belief in the nonviolent potential of Zen Buddhism also materialized in his creation, with a group of friends at his Maui zendo, of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF) in 1978 (Simmer-Brown, 2000: 68-73). This nonprofit organization, affiliated with the Fellowship of Reconciliation, has as mission “… to serve as a catalyst for socially engaged Buddhism,” and “… to help beings liberate themselves from the suffering that manifests in individuals, relationships, institutions, and social systems” (BPF, “Mission,” http://www.bpf.org/html/about_us/founders/founders.html). Although the BPF is not limited to Zen Buddhists, its creation nevertheless demonstrates Aitken’s concern with taking the Buddhist teachings out into the world in order to reduce suffering.
165 Aitken, 1984: 16.
166 Aitken, 1984: 19. Concerning the political involvement of Japanese Zen Buddhist individuals in wars, and his own teacher Yasutani’s advice to practitioners to follow their draft call during the Vietnam War,
usually not one who is considered "awakened," undertaking to follow the precepts will still help one in the process. This is confirmed when he interprets Dōgen's statement "The Buddha-seed grows in accordance with not taking life. Transmit the life of the Buddha's wisdom and do not kill" as meaning "[w]ith the practice of not killing... you will become the Buddha and transmit his wisdom."\textsuperscript{167} By associating adherence to the precept of not-killing and awakening, therefore, Aitken presents nonviolence at the core of his Zen practice.

The insight into the interdependence of all phenomena is also an important aspect of Zen Buddhism that is cited as conducive to a nonviolent attitude toward all forms of life. On this world view, Cynthia Eller affirms: "The Buddhist doctrines of dependent co-arising and no-self establish a framework in which the advancement of the true needs of the self cannot possibly detract from the true needs of the other."\textsuperscript{168} It is from such an ontological stance that Joshu Sasaki Rōshi (b. 1907), Rinzai teacher and founder of Mount Baldy Zen Center, advances that once the distinction between the self and others is dissolved, an individual is able to work in a total embracing attitude of others where "one can truly be peace and work for peace."\textsuperscript{169} Daniel Zelinski, who has worked on mysticism and morality, also presents Dōgen as teaching the interdependence of the self and others. By interpreting the assertion that "all beings have Buddha-nature" to mean that "all

\textsuperscript{167} Aitken, 1984: 24.

\textsuperscript{168} Eller, 1992: 94. This is confirmed in McMahan's more recent work on Buddhist modernism, where he claims: "As articulated in contemporary Buddhist literature, the concept of interdependence combines empirical description, world-affirming wonder, and an ethical imperative" (2008: 150).

\textsuperscript{169} Cited in Ives, 1992: 141.
beings is Buddha-nature,” Zelinski argues, Dōgen effectively taught the transcendence of the dichotomy between self and others. Such a move beyond seeing others as separate from oneself can easily lead to the claim that harming others is the same as harming oneself. Hence, the Zen world view of interdependence of all phenomena, including the self and others, justifies nonviolence according to certain individuals.

Aitken articulates the connection between interdependence and nonviolence in more specific terms. For him, the concept of interdependence is central to explain why one ought not to harm other people, and even the environment. Referring to the *Avatāraṇaka sūtra* and the image of the “Net of Indra,” he presents the doctrine of interpenetration as meaning “that I and all beings perfectly reflect and indeed are all people, animals, plants, and so on.” As a world view, this doctrine implies that every time harm is done to a being, it resonates to all other beings, even oneself. Aitken, therefore, advances that “[v]iolence to another is violence to all, including myself.” Such a presentation of the non-dual, interrelated status of the self and others, therefore, is one of the bases of the Zen ethic of nonviolence articulated by Aitken.

Dōgen’s view on the effect of the insight of interdependence on individuals’ behaviour is also rephrased similarly by Zelinski:

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171 Ch. *Huayan jing* 華嚴經, or “Flower Adornment Sūtra,” T 278.9, dated between the first and second centuries CE (Cleary, 1984 [1986; 1987; 1989; 1993]: 1).
172 Aitken, 1984: 9. It is important to note that such an interpretation of the interdependence of phenomena is a modern one, based especially on Fazang’s (643-712) writings mixed with romantic and rationalist ideas. On the topic, McMahan argues: “The contemporary Buddhist ethic of interdependence, though it had occasional precedents in pre-modern Asian Buddhism, likely worked its way into contemporary Buddhist thought through remnants of the Romantic-Transcendentalist line of thinking that resonated with similar ideas in Huayan and Zen thought” (McMahan, 2008: 178).
Dōgen’s ideally nonattached individual is a humble agent in the world whose perceived sense of a pervasive interconnected unity of all things through Buddha-nature instills a sympathetic connection to others within him or her, which in turn results in his or her projects and actions expressing both respect and compassion.\textsuperscript{174} Although such a description does not entail nonviolence specifically, it is easy to make the jump and argue that treating others with respect and compassion can also mean not using violence against them. The figure of the bodhisattva, furthermore, stands as the embodiment of a compassionate attitude. Since the ideal bodhisattva has gained insight into this interdependent world view, his or her moral actions are spontaneous. This spontaneity, furthermore, replaces deliberate action based on rigid definitions of good and evil, which remains faithful to the Mahāyāna approach to the precepts.

\textbf{Conclusion}

This presentation of certain trends in the association between Zen Buddhism and nonviolence is by no means exhaustive, but it nevertheless prepares the ground for a discussion of how individual practitioners perceive nonviolence in a Canadian Sōtō Zen community. Furthermore, these particular uses of Buddhist concepts to justify a nonviolent stance of the Zen tradition are part of a modern discourse characterized by the globalization of Buddhism and an increasing engagement with Western intellectual and cultural modes. In this sense, the urge to articulate a Zen Buddhist ethic is a product of modernity, along with, in Buddhist Modernism scholar David L. McMahan’s words,

\textsuperscript{174} Zelinski, 2003: 60.
individualism, egalitarianism, liberalism, democratic ideals, and social reforms.\textsuperscript{175} Ives concurs with the need to recognize the recent developments in the articulation of a Zen ethical system: "...Zen ethicists could address the further question of whether Engaged Buddhists are engaging in acts of \textit{eisegesis}, looking selectively in Buddhist texts and practices to find support for preexisting stances that they brought to their practice of Buddhism in the first place."\textsuperscript{176} While addressing different individuals and groups depicting Buddhism as a nonviolent tradition, therefore, it is also important to notice the recent scholarly debate on the relative modernity of a Buddhism serving the social aspect of a nonviolent practice.

Although very general, this chapter has demonstrated that when it comes to the question of the violent or nonviolent orientation of Zen Buddhism, the tradition has theoretical and historical aspects that could serve as evidence for both sides. Indeed, Zen Buddhism has a past of both war and peace, as Buddhist groups allied themselves with political rulers or social causes. If the teachings can be used to justify both war and peace, however, it is only by giving attention to a tradition of nonviolence in a specific context that one can understand the underlying mechanisms that are at play when a religion is internalized by a teacher and his or her followers. Attempting to understand how practitioners of the Association Zen de Montréal view their practice and its relation to nonviolence, hopefully, will provide a more accurate picture of how the different strands of violence and nonviolence are negotiated in one particular group. At play in my research is thus not the question of whether Buddhist nonviolence or engaged Buddhism

\textsuperscript{175} McMahan, 2008: 13.
\textsuperscript{176} Ives, 2005: 53.
are "recovered" or "reconstructed," but rather how they manifest in a particular context. In this sense, I am following McMahan's observation that "The historian of religion, qua historian, should not merely recapitulate sectarian or even canonical rhetorics of authenticity but examine what practitioners do with the texts and other elements of the tradition."\(^\text{177}\)

\(^\text{177}\) McMahan, 2008: 179.
CHAPTER TWO: Deshimaru’s War

Introduction

Any treatment of the teachings and practices of nonviolence within Deshimaru’s group, the Association Zen Internationale, must first explore the extent to which the founder favoured nonviolence over violence in solving conflicts. Such an exploration is all the more important since Deshimaru, as a Japanese man who lived through the Fifteen-Year War (1931-1945), took part in the war activities of his country. As addressed briefly in chapter one, the involvement of the Sōtō Zen Buddhist sect (like most Buddhist sects in Japan) in approving the war and Japan’s colonial expansion, is now well known due to the scholarship of individuals such as Brian Victoria and Japanese historian Ienaga Saburō.¹⁷⁸ Within this context, therefore, it becomes all the more interesting to see how Deshimaru, as a Buddhist individual following the teachings of Sōtō Zen master Sawaki Kōdō, presented his actions during this period. Such an approach will demonstrate that, through his autobiographical writings, Deshimaru attempted to create an ideal of nonviolent action during a time of conflict.

Before addressing the nonviolent stance of Deshimaru during the war, I first consider the position of Zen Buddhist sects before and during the war in order to provide the context of his narrative. For this purpose, I use different stories of war resistance as documented by Victoria, Ienaga, and Sōtō Zen priest and scholar Ishikawa Rikizan to offer examples of the possible obstacles to advancing a nonviolent stance during this period.

period as a Buddhist. Second, I review two major strategies used by Deshimaru to establish his distance from the pro-war Buddhist rhetoric at the time. This section starts with a retelling of three different episodes narrated in his autobiographical writings describing him as a nonviolent protagonist. I also address his presentation of a nonviolent Sawaki, and contrast this picture with the war-enthusiast Sawaki depicted in the scholarship of Victoria and Ienaga. Finally, I address the literary genre of Deshimaru’s writings and situate his autobiography within the context of its place and time: Paris of the 1970s. Doing so will demonstrate that by presenting his wartime actions as nonviolent, not only is Deshimaru’s work apologetic, but it also contributes to the creation of an ideal that impacts the way his Zen is understood and practiced by his Western followers.

1. Context: Zen Buddhism in the Post-Meiji Era

1.1. The Construction of the Post-Meiji Nationalistic Buddhist Discourse

As addressed in chapter one, by the time of the Fifteen-Year War, Japanese Buddhist sects in general supported the nationalistic endeavours of Japan by providing it with pro-war rhetoric and others means such as missionary activities. In order to

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179 For a list of other wartime Buddhist activities, see chapter one, p. 40. These missionary efforts started after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), when Japanese Buddhist missions were established in China. After the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), Buddhist missions expanded to Korea and continued until the end of the Fifteen-Year War in 1945 (Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 63-65). The first Sōtō Zen temple in Korea was established in Pusan in 1905 (Hur, 1999: 107). Individuals taking part in the missions were involved in a variety of tasks. For example, they taught the Japanese language to colonized populations, provided shelters for soldiers, helped employees of Japanese companies, and even acted as spies in some cases. During these years, Buddhism also became an important element within the Japanese colonial discourse and the development of the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,” the name given to the colonial project to unite Asia under Japanese hegemony (Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 65).
understand this readiness to embark on an aggressive campaign, however, it is important to take into account the socio-political elements that led to the situation.\textsuperscript{180} The Buddhism that emerged out of the early Meiji period (1868-1912) was one that responded and adapted itself to Nativist ideology.\textsuperscript{181} In the words of Ketelaar, by the time of the Meiji Constitution in 1889, “Buddhism had managed to transform itself from being perceived as one of the plethora of ‘ancient evils’ into one of the essential repositories of the true essence of ‘Japanese culture.’”\textsuperscript{182} Indeed, the eagerness to demonstrate the cooperation of the Buddhist sects with the government can be sensed in a letter dating from 1871 and signed by thirty-four priests from different sects, containing the following words: “All [Buddhist] sects uphold the Great Teaching of our Imperial Nation; thus, without exception, the teaching of each [Buddhist] sect should be used in the guidance of the people’s hearts.”\textsuperscript{183} This close association was also illustrated by the participation of Buddhist priests in the Ministry of the Doctrine, a government body created in 1872 and

\textsuperscript{180} In fact, the late Tokugawa and early Meiji periods represent a turning point in the relation between Buddhist sects and the government in Japan. As demonstrated by the scholarship of James Edward Ketelaar, the Meiji restoration, with its nativist, anti-Buddhist rhetoric as popularized by individuals such as Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843), acted as a blow to the tradition (1990: 30). Buddhism was characterized as a foreign religion inimical to the Japanese spirit and Buddhists as parasitic individuals detrimental to the economy and society in general (Ketelaar, 1990: 29-41, see also Sharf, 1995a: 109). During the early Meiji years, the polemic against Buddhism was implemented through actual government policies (see Ketelaar, 1990: 68). Followed by the separation of Shinto and Buddhism (shinbutsu bunri 神仏分離), and the rejection and destruction of Buddhism in Society (haibutsu kishaku 建仏毀釈), these policies eventually led to a period of Buddhist persecutions (Ketelaar, 1990: 43-86). Such a context partly explains the subsequent re-positioning of Buddhist sects in relation to imperial authority.

\textsuperscript{181} Nativism was a nationalistic ideology that emerged in the late Tokugawa period through the writings of Hirata. Its proponents advocated a “return” to a constructed ancient Japan by heralding Shinto as the true religion of the country, and divine imperial rule based on the “Unity of Rites and Rule” as the ideal government system. Such ideas played an important role in the Meiji Restoration (1868), as well as the conception of Buddhism as a “foreign” and thus “impure” (Ketelaar, 1990: 87).

\textsuperscript{182} Ketelaar, 1990: 86.
\textsuperscript{183} Ketelaar, 1990: 98.
using priests as doctrinal instructors to promote the National Doctrine to the population.\(^{184}\)

The denigration and then persecution of Buddhism in the early Meiji years thus fostered a Buddhism ready to comply with the government.

The Meiji criticism of Buddhism as foreign, parasitic, and superstitious also led to the formulation of so-called “New Buddhism” (shin bukkyō 新仏教). This reformist Buddhism, characterized by intersectarian organizations concerned with social action, was articulated by intellectuals highly influenced by the Western Enlightenment and Romantic discourses. Making their Buddhism relevant to a modern Japan, these Buddhists claimed “a transcendent, unificatory epistemology not bound by any particular chronology or temporality that was, however, simultaneously present within any particular historical place.”\(^{185}\) Within this context, Zen Buddhists presented their type of Buddhism as rational and totally compatible with Enlightenment thinking. This type of Zen was promulgated during the 1893 World Parliament of Religions, and subsequently transmitted to the West by individuals such as Shaku Soen, D.T. Suzuki, and Senzaki Nyogen.\(^{186}\) Through their discourses, Buddhism was transformed to fit the ideals of a modern Japan.

A result of both Buddhist persecutions under the Meiji era and the subsequent reformulation of a Buddhism in total harmony with the “modern” ideals of the West,

\(^{184}\) Ketelaar, 1990: 99. This doctrine is delineated by the so-called Three Standards of Instruction (Sanjō no kyōsoku 三条の教則), nationalistic and nativist-flavored injunctions which consisted in the following: “1. Comply with the commands to revere the kami and love the nation. 2. Illuminate the principle of heaven and the way of man. 3. Serve the Emperor and faithfully maintain the will of the court” (Ketelaar, 1990:106).

\(^{185}\) Ketelaar, 1990: 134.

\(^{186}\) For further discussion of New Buddhism, see, for example, Ketelaar, 1990: 132-135; 164-173.
Buddhist priests thus enlisted in a movement to make their ideas and practices relevant to turn-of-the-century, nationalistic Japan. Doing so, they readily promoted the nationalistic ideologies of the government, as Sharf notes:

In their spirited defense of their creed, Buddhist leaders actively appropriated the ideological agenda of government propagandists and the nativist movement. They became willing accomplices in the promulgation of kokutai (national polity) ideology—the attempt to render Japan a culturally homogeneous and spiritually evolved nation politically unified under the divine rule of the emperor.\textsuperscript{187}

When support of the nation occurred during times of war, Buddhist priests did not retreat from their effort, articulating a discourse that legitimated Japan’s use of force to accomplish its political goals. Zen Buddhist priests, in particular, were keen on emphasizing the relevance of their sect in matters of warfare. For example, Nukariya Kaiten (1867-1934), a Sōtō priest who wrote Religion of the Samurai: A Study of Zen Philosophy and Discipline in China and Japan, published in 1913, argued: “It is Zen that modern Japan, especially after the Russo-Japanese War, has acknowledged as an ideal doctrine for her rising generation.”\textsuperscript{188} In such a context, any discourse that went against the aggressive, nationalistic ideals of state ideology was obviously difficult to articulate, let alone promulgate.

In an era of Japanese nationalism and colonial expansion, Buddhist compliance with the imperial system thus translated into a readiness to legitimate and even participate in these endeavours. One of the main nationalistic activities Buddhist priests participated in was missionary expansion in Korea and China. As the Buddhist situation since the

\textsuperscript{187} Sharf, 1995a: 110.
\textsuperscript{188} Cited in Sharf, 1995a: 115.
Meiji demonstrates, however, it is easy to understand why, in the words of Ishikawa, "...the various Japanese Buddhist organizations (including the Sōtō sect), hoping to recover the responsibilities endangered by the early Meiji situation, all jumped on the bandwagon by starting missionary activity on the Asian continent."\textsuperscript{189} Such an idea is also expressed by Ketelaar, who argues that "Meiji Buddhism’s attempt to define its own history ... was an attempt to dissipate the vision of Buddhism as heresy; this very creation of a historical autonomy directly contributed to the production of a pan-Asianism central to the geo-political strategies of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s."\textsuperscript{190} In other words, reacting to the dramatic religious changes brought about by the Meiji government, Buddhist priests re-oriented their stance as a means of survival.

1.2. Going Against the Nationalistic Discourse: Voices of Dissent

Within this context, Buddhist anti-war ideas were not part of the mainstream discourse. Looking for individuals who opposed the war, we must therefore look beyond overt acts of resistance, and give more attention to individuals who did their best to avoid taking part in the violence of the war. In order to classify resistance to violence, Ienaga names two broad categories: passive and active resistance, with each having further subdivisions.\textsuperscript{191} His inclusion of silence as one of the methods of passive resistance illustrates well the fact that one cannot underestimate the risks associated with resisting the army. Ienaga also mentions the words of an individual he relates as stating that

\textsuperscript{189} Ishikawa, 1998: 95-96. For a treatment of the Sōtō sect in Korea specifically, see Hur 1999.

\textsuperscript{190} Ketelaar, 1990: 214.

\textsuperscript{191} Ienaga, 1978: 204.
“anyone who opposed the army would be killed.”192 Nevertheless, there are some documented cases of resistance to the pro-war Buddhist rhetoric, and the section below attempts to provide examples of these exceptions to the rule.

Ishikawa, in an article documenting the activities of two Sōtō Zen monks before the Fifteen-Year War, demonstrates how the ideals of Buddhism could be carried to two opposite extremes. On one hand, he introduces Takeda Hanshi (1864-1911), a monk greatly involved in the missionary activities of his sect and who was appointed by his sect to the role of superintendent of the Korean mission.193 On the other hand, Ishikawa presents Uchiyama Gudō (1874-1911), an active priest who encouraged “the refusal of military conscription and the denial of the emperor system” as a way of destroying “the roots of the people’s suffering.”194 While the first individual received the approval of his sect, the other was expelled from it and eventually received the death penalty by hanging. These two cases, when placed side by side, demonstrate the realities facing Buddhist individuals: resistance to nationalistic rhetoric and Japan’s missionary activities was met with imprisonment or even death. The following examples of resistance to the Fifteen-Year War support the same conclusion.

One organized movement against the growing Japanese militarism was the Shinkō Bukkyō Seinen Dōmei, translated by Victoria as the “Youth League for Revitalizing Buddhism.”195 The nature of the opposition this group presented to the current state of Buddhism can be seen in the 1931 declaration of the reasons behind its creation: “A

192 Ienaga, 1978: 204.
revitalized Buddhism must be based on self-reflection. It must deny currently existing Buddhism which has already lost its capacity for confrontation while, at the same time, calling on all Buddhists to return to the Buddha.”\textsuperscript{196} However, the difficulties the group encountered as it tried to promote its claims to the larger Buddhist community demonstrate that its opinions were not welcomed by many people. In fact, when representatives of the League tried to convince the greater All-Japan Federation of Buddhist Youth Organizations (Zen Nippon Bukkyō Seinenkai Renmei), of which it was a member, to oppose “anti-foreign, militarist, and nationalist ideologies,” it was expelled from the Federation.\textsuperscript{197} The arrests of many members of the League in 1937 and its eventual disappearance\textsuperscript{198} also demonstrate that any opposition to the state’s endeavours, along with its Buddhist support, could only be enacted under the risk of being persecuted.

This particular event, therefore, suggests that organized resistance was not a successful option for Buddhists opposed to the war and the state’s nationalistic agenda. It also confirms Ienaga’s argument that: “Any really determined action to stop the war and prevent a national disaster inevitably entailed illegal resistance. . . .there was almost no organized illegal resistance in Japan.”\textsuperscript{199} Such affirmation is all the more relevant since Ienaga’s chapter addressing resistance to the war also includes non-Buddhist individuals, which shows that this persecution applied to any dissenter, whatever his or her status and religious affiliation. Tight government control thus helps to explain why little resistance to the war occurred. The following consists of an attempt to assemble instances where

\textsuperscript{196} Quoted in Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 67. 
\textsuperscript{197} Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 71. 
\textsuperscript{198} Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 73. 
\textsuperscript{199} Ienaga, 1978: 208.
Buddhist individuals refused to participate in the violence of the war, although they were not war dissenters per se.

Ienaga mentions an instance reported by Ishiga Osamu, a member of War Resister International (a Quaker organization), who heard, while in detention, of a member of the Shin sect “who refused to take human life.” Since this anecdote does not tell us whether there were many other similar cases, one cannot conclude that the Buddhist precept not to kill was appealed to generally. However, it shows that it is only by looking at scattered statements like this one that we can get a glimpse of the use of Buddhist elements as basis for nonviolent action or resistance to the war. A similar case is found in the acts of a Jōdo sect chief priest, who put the following passage from United States of America’s founding father Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) on the bulletin board of his temple in 1939: “There never was a good war or a bad peace. A reckless war destroys in one year what man took many years to create. [Benjamin] Franklin.” Again, one may ask how widespread such acts of resistance could have been in wartime Japan, and how parishioners reacted to them. Given the limited amount of similar records, it is also important to think about the possibility that much of the documentation of resistance may have been lost or suppressed by the state. Since the state successfully enrolled most Buddhist priests in its war effort, it may be that resisting members were simply silenced. The following story shows that trend.

Sōtō Zen abbot Kondō Genkō (b. 1879), from Seiunji near Tōkyō, included the following statement in one of his evening talks in 1937: “It is troubling that hostilities

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have broken out between Japan and China. War is an activity in which people kill each other. Whether it be friend or foe, the killing of people is monstrous. There is nothing more sinful in this world than the killing of people.\textsuperscript{202} This priest was warned by the police at least once, and seemingly resigned from his abbotship to eventually disappear from his monastery.\textsuperscript{203} This shows the type of control Buddhist priests were under, as well as the sensitivity of topics that did not strictly follow the state's nationalistic propaganda. A similar incident documented by Victoria actually involves the protest of parishioners against anti-war rhetoric, which shows that they were aware of the "right" discourse that should have been adopted by priests when they spoke of the position of Japan during the war. In 1937, Shōgan Takenaka, an abbot affiliated with the Higashi Honganji branch of the Shin sect, stated:

\begin{quote}
I don't know what others may think about the recent trouble [in China], but it looks to me like aggression. From a Mahayana point of view, it is improper to needlessly deprive either oneself or others of their lives, incurring enormous costs and loss of life in the process. War is the greatest sin there is. Just how much advantage is there taking in such places as Tianjin or Baoding? It would be better to stop the war in such places.\textsuperscript{204}
\end{quote}

Elements of this statement show an acute awareness of the contradiction between what Shōgan called the "Mahāyāna point of view" and the expansionist attitude of Japan, which led to the murder of many Chinese and Korean individuals. This quotation is also far removed from the philosophically-justified killing of any force opposing the establishment of an Oriental harmony under Japanese hegemony. It is therefore not

\textsuperscript{202} Cited in Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 74.
\textsuperscript{203} Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 74.
\textsuperscript{204} Cited in Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 75.
surprising that Shōgan was charged with “fabrications and wild rumour,” and put under surveillance until 1945, when the war ended. Such an incident thus confirms the danger associated with holding an opinion contrary to the state’s, especially when this opinion was expressed to the wider public.

In terms of evidence of Buddhist opposition to killing coming from the battlefield itself, one rare instance has been documented by Victoria. The original source for this incident was Tsuzuki Mana (b. 1920), former president of a company, who recalled his training as a private in the newsletter of his company, which Kōno Taitsū (b. 1930), then president of Hanazono University, accidently found during a visit to the company in 1995. The event, involving the said president and a Sōtō Zen priest named Daiun Gikō (b. 1922), is an illustration of two individuals resisting the act of killing required in their training. Upon being ordered by the leader of the platoon to murder tied Chinese prisoners with the bayonets attached to their rifles, both Tsuzuki and Gikō refrained from following orders and were therefore punished. This story illustrates an act of resistance to killing directly on the battlefield, albeit during training. Again, punishment is the consequence of such acts, but, perhaps a reflection of the smaller scale repercussions of their actions, it was less severe than the types of punishment suffered by individuals who publicly disagreed with the ideas behind the war.

These examples show that even during times of conflict and nationalistic propaganda, some individuals attempted to go against the grain in either speech or action.

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205 Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 75.
206 Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 75-76.
207 Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 76-77. Their punishment consisted in walking in the snow imitating dogs with their boots in their mouths, which both resisters found “unexpectedly light” (Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 77).
As proposed by Ishikawa, the key to understanding the difference between resisting and adopting the pro-war rhetoric of the time may reside more in situational factors than the doctrinal background of each individual.\(^{208}\) Indeed, the above-mentioned cases represent individuals who used Buddhist elements to go against the nationalistic trends of their affiliations, just as their sects used the same Buddhist background to lend their support to the state. In the following section, I address Deshimaru’s presentation of his own battles against the violence of the war, and his use of Buddhist teachings to justify his behaviour. It is important to read Deshimaru’s case in light of the medium that documents it, namely his own Autobiographie d’un moine Zen, originally written in Japanese and published in French in 1977.\(^ {209}\) Furthermore, attention must be given to the context of his writings. Deshimaru, a Japanese master who intended to spread Zen in Europe, writing toward the end of the Vietnam War, had no interest in presenting his participation in the Japanese nationalism and militarism decried by so many in the West. Therefore, while his actions can be compared to those of the individuals mentioned above, one must be careful to keep in mind the time, place, and intent behind his writings.\(^ {210}\) I will assess the impact of these important factors in the third section of this chapter, after presenting his war stories.

2. Stories of Resistance: The Creation of a Nonviolent Ideal

Although Deshimaru was in no way a war dissenter, from his autobiographical writings emerges a desire to display his concern to avoid causing harm on an individual

\(^{208}\) Ishikawa, 1998: 106.

\(^{209}\) For more details about this work, see section three of the present chapter.

\(^{210}\) It must be noted that the same critical analysis could apply to each case mentioned above. However, for purposes of space and relevance to the topic at hand, I must limit this analysis to Deshimaru’s particular case.
basis. Born in Saga prefecture, young Deshimaru received military training at his father's request but never became part of the army due to his short-sightedness.\footnote{Deshimaru, 1977: 45. Maybe as a demonstration of his distaste for the military, Deshimaru adds that this forced training went against his own wishes to attend the Fine Arts school of Ueno, in Tōkyō. In contrast, Deshimaru's close friend Tamotsu organized a Buddhist group with pacifist ideals (1977: 80-81, 130-131).} He then worked for different companies, hoping to be sent to work abroad, and obtained a position in the weapon-producing Mitsubishi company in 1940.\footnote{Deshimaru's desire to learn English and to travel is a recurring theme in his autobiography, perhaps hinting at his eventual proselytizing activities in Europe.} After the events at Pearl Harbor, his company sent him to Indonesia to act as administrator of the Dutch colonial mines taken over by the Japanese army.\footnote{Deshimaru, 1977: 134, 143.} It is in this position, as a Japanese occupier, that he relates his ability to work in nonviolent ways with diverse conflicts that arose during the five-year period he would spend in South-East Asia. I will present three particular events that illustrate this tendency, and then deal with his presentation of his teacher, Sawaki.

### 2.1. Ideal War Stories

A first notable anecdote in which Deshimaru demonstrates his concern with nonviolence\footnote{This concern with nonviolence, as mentioned above, should be treated within the context of this work, which he wrote while in Paris. More information about the context of Deshimaru's autobiography and what it can teach about its nonviolence will be provided below.} occurs when he helps a group of Singaporean actresses faced with the threat of being forced to become prostitutes by the Japanese army. In his presentation of the event, he emphasizes the high risks associated with such an action by relating that he hesitated due to his fear of being accused of resistance by the army.\footnote{Deshimaru, 1977: 151.} In the end, however, Deshimaru agrees to hide the girls. Thanks to his connections with a certain
sergeant Hashimoto, he is able to plead to general Imamura Hitoshi (1886-1968)\(^{216}\) and saves the actresses from prostitution.\(^{217}\) Effectively, the sole threat of contacting Imamura, coupled with Deshimaru’s connection with the general, scared the head of the local Japanese forces, a colonel named Yokohama. Through opposing Yokohama’s and his Japanese army’s plans, therefore, Deshimaru recounts that he saved many women from the type of forced sexual behaviour that was not uncommon during the wartime period.\(^{218}\) Following Ienaga’s characterization of prostitution, which “is by its very nature a violation of women’s rights to a decent occupation and livelihood,”\(^{219}\) one can see that Deshimaru’s act prevented, at least on a small scale, this type of violence. Furthermore, the means used to reach this end did not include any type of violence, as he acted through a legitimate complaint to a superior.

A second case narrated by Deshimaru involves what he describes as the unfair incarceration of Chinese and Indonesian individuals by the Japanese army. Under the cover of accusations of smuggling large sums of money back to Chiang Kai-shek’s government, the Japanese military police seemingly avenged their failed attempt at acquiring prostitutes.\(^{220}\) Facing this situation, Deshimaru writes that he decided to confront the army and attempted to liberate the prisoners. First, he smuggles food and

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\(^{216}\) Note that this is the same Imamura who was recognized as “one of the most intelligent strategists in the Imperial Army,” and who was revered by his troops as “epitomizing the essence of the Bushidō spirit” (Victoria, 2003: 108).


\(^{218}\) This type of behaviour happened in Korea, where women were sent to the front troops as “comfort girls” (Ienaga, 1978: 158-159), in Malaya, where girls’ schools were changed into brothels for the Japanese (Ienaga, 1978: 174), and in many other places, where even Japanese girls were used for this type of service (Ienaga, 1978: 184).

\(^{219}\) Ienaga, 1978: 184.

\(^{220}\) This is Deshimaru’s allegations for their motives. See 1977: 153.
goods at night to comfort the prisoners, bribing the prison guards to get in.\(^{221}\) However, after a few altercations between Deshimaru and the guards when he tries to let a Chinese woman visit her father, Deshimaru is incarcerated too and thrown into a poorly lit and badly ventilated cell. At some point during his three weeks of imprisonment, he relates that he screamed the following at the police:

\begin{center}
I did not do anything wrong! I do not care about the law and your fallacious reasoning, I only obey my own consciousness. My act is not contrary to the teaching of the Buddha. Your foolishness, your rigidity and your incomprehension will lead you to a situation much worse than what I am suffering right now!\(^{222}\)
\end{center}

This statement marks a contrast between, on one hand, the military law, actions and reasoning of the army, and, on the other, Deshimaru’s own actions, consciousness, and what he saw as the teachings of the Buddha. He thus situates himself as standing apart from the cruel acts of the army, and as their victim due to his sense of what he presents as a Buddhist-inspired justice. Through this story, therefore, he presents a Buddhist ideal of nonviolence that may redeem his participation in the war, at least in the eyes of his followers.

Ultimately, Deshimaru tells us he was able to get out of prison and even liberate the hundred prisoners, once more by appealing to his connections with higher authorities in the army. He contacted general Imamura through a letter he gave to his ally in the imperial army, sergeant Hashimoto.\(^{223}\) Reflecting on the event, Deshimaru writes about the contrast between his own actions and those of other Mitsubishi workers, who would

\(^{221}\) Deshimaru, 1977: 154.
\(^{222}\) Deshimaru, 1977: 158. He notes after this quotation that those policemen were condemned to death after the war, confirming the feelings expressed in his statement.
\(^{223}\) Deshimaru, 1977: 159.
not help the prisoners out of fear of being in conflict with the company.\textsuperscript{224} In another work, *Zen et vie quotidienne*, Deshimaru alludes to this same event in the following words: "The military police wanted to exterminate the prisoners; but I went to prison and distributed goods, cigarettes, which gave them the solace that they were missing."\textsuperscript{225} These additional details illustrate his emphasis on the exceptional nature of his actions, with the result that they appear all the more courageous considering the heavy risks involved in defying the army's will.

The third case in which Deshimaru relates his attempt to deal nonviolently with the situations that arose during his stay in Indonesia can be found in his cooperation with the Indonesian Independence movement led by Indonesian leader Sukarno (1901-1970). This case must be treated with great caution, as the type of help he provided to the native population consisted in letting them have the Japanese army's weapons after the latter's defeat. The help is therefore related to giving weapons to a particular group, and is obviously not an act of nonviolence. On the other hand, this event is worth mentioning as it is illustrative of Deshimaru's desire to show his reader that his individual consciousness was disconnected from the Japanese army's endeavours.

At the time of Japan's defeat, an independence movement started in the south of Indonesia. One of the main demands of this group was for the defeated Japanese army's weapons in order to prevent Indonesia from falling under colonial rule again. In October 1945, a delegation of the independence movement, under the leadership of an individual named Manusama, was able to occupy the capital of Bangka island, where Deshimaru

\textsuperscript{224} Deshimaru, 1977: 159.
\textsuperscript{225} Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 145.
soon, the independence movement threatened to kill Japanese civilians if the army refused to give up their weapons, but the Japanese army, in fear of being accused of rebellion by the allied forces, would not give in to the demands. Manusama then convinced Deshimaru to meet with the Japanese general and ask him to relinquish the army's weapons, but Deshimaru was not even allowed to talk to the general. Later that night, realizing the massacre that was on its way, Deshimaru implored Manusama to take the general as hostage "pacifically" in order to convince him to give up the army's weapons. This plan was successful to a certain extent, as the weapons were delivered by the army to the Indonesians, and the massacre of civilians was avoided. Such a solution also prevented further conflict since the Japanese army would have had to take up arms against the independence movement in the event of a massacre.

Deshimaru's attempt to avoid greater violence, here, can be better understood in terms of the ends he used to solve the conflict between the Japanese army and the independence movement. Since the objective of this manoeuvre was the distribution of weapons to the native population, however, this case must also be treated as trying to help avoiding the re-colonization of Indonesia after the war, which was not necessarily without violence. Nevertheless, this story is a good illustration of the mixed motives of a man participating in a war, trying to avoid violence but also perceiving its potential need in

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228 Term used by Deshimaru, 1997: 172.
229 Three of the general's guards were shot dead during the altercations leading to his captivity.
230 This type of cooperation was widespread in the war's aftermath, as Sukarno and other independence leaders sought help from the Japanese to confront the Allied forces and establish the independence of Indonesia (Ienaga, 1978: 178).
terms of helping populations avoid being further dominated by more colonial powers.\textsuperscript{231}

These particular acts were not exceptional ones, since there were many instances of Japanese army factions' helping the Indonesians resist the Allied forces. What is important to retain from this story, perhaps, is the way in which Deshimaru presents his desire to help Indonesians attain independence.

\textbf{2.2. Sawaki’s Two Discourses}

Beyond his actions during the war, Deshimaru also depicts his master Sawaki’s teachings as promoting ideals of tolerance and nonviolence. His representation of Sawaki, a Sōtō Zen master otherwise known for his pro-war rhetoric, demonstrates a concern with distancing not only himself, but also his lineage, from any involvement in the violence of the war. I will first briefly present Sawaki’s war rhetoric as documented by Victoria and Ishikawa and then contrast it with Deshimaru’s description of his master.

The involvement of Sawaki in Japanese war activities started when he was drafted into the military for the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). In his memoirs, he writes of his initial reluctance to serve in the army, thinking it would conflict with his intent to follow the Buddhist path.\textsuperscript{232} Nevertheless, his attitude changed as he and his platoon engaged in battles. He thus also recorded his feelings about killing in his memoirs:

Once we started fighting, however, I felt that this was great. When my rifle would not work anymore due to overheating from continuous firing, I would shift my position and piss on it to cool it off. Then I would shoot some more .... “Combat is easy,” I

\textsuperscript{231} Such a concern for the local populations may not excuse Deshimaru’s role as an occupier in Indonesia, but it still demonstrates his desire to distance himself from the imperialistic goals of his country.

thought. "Until I came here, nothing I had experienced gave me such a feeling of freedom. There is no place better than this." ... I killed a belly full of people in the Russo-Japanese war. There was one battle in particular during which we lured the enemy to fall into a pit and we picked them off like sitting ducks with great efficiency.233

This quotation illustrates the facility with which Sawaki started killing once on the battlefield. His doubts about the incompatibility of war and his Zen training, as expressed in his reluctance to engage in the military, were seemingly dissipated by the feelings of freedom he experienced as he started killing. Second, as mentioned by Ishikawa, this piece of writing is a typical illustration "of how the Buddhist ideal of 'not taking life' had no effect whatsoever on the circumstances of a Buddhist's experience of 'freedom' and satori."234 This particular discourse, furthermore, would become popular in later literature combining Zen Buddhism and martial arts.235

Sawaki's war experience turned into full-fledged pro-war rhetoric at least by the time of the Fifteen-Year War. In an article he wrote in 1942 in the Buddhist magazine Daihōrin, he expresses the following stance:

...it is just to punish those who disturb the public order. Whether one kills or does not kill, the precept forbidding killing [is preserved]. It is the precept forbidding killing that wields the sword. It is the precept that throws the bomb.236

235 This modern depiction of Zen as compatible with martial arts is represented in its earliest forms by works such as Nitobe Inazō's Bushidō: The Soul of Japan (1905), or Nakariya Kaiten's Religion of the Samurai: A Study of Zen Philosophy and Discipline in China and Japan (1913). For further discussion of this phenomenon, see Sharf, 1995a: 112-116, and Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 95-129.
This rhetoric employs Mahāyāna Buddhist notions such as the emptiness of the precepts and the consequent relaxing of the necessity to uphold them.\textsuperscript{237} Coming from a master who has been labeled “one of the most representative teachers of the modern Sōtō school,”\textsuperscript{238} Sawaki’s rhetoric demonstrates one type of support for the war in Japan.

Before turning to Deshimaru’s treatment of his master, it is important to note that Sawaki’s stance during the war was later criticized by members of his own sect. For example, Sōtō Zen scholar and proponent of Critical Buddhism Hakayama Noriaki (b. 1943) condemns Sawaki’s behaviour and rhetoric during the war, arguing: “Not only was Sawaki not a Buddhist, but he took up arms against [Sōtō Zen Master] Dōgen himself….”\textsuperscript{239} Such a criticism attempts to distance the Sōtō sect from the actions of individuals who participated in the pro-war discourse of the twentieth century. Instead of criticizing and condemning his master’s actions, however, Deshimaru employs a different strategy, which is an alternative presentation of Sawaki’s discourse washed of any violence. Doing so, he further participates in constructing an ideal of nonviolence during a time of war, which is all the more interesting due to the master’s use of Zen rhetoric to support Japan’s war activities.

One presentation of Sawaki’s words is found in Deshimaru’s autobiographical writings. As a conclusion to the chapter relating the above-mentioned prison event, he quotes a letter he received from his master. In contrast to Sawaki the war-enthusiast

\textsuperscript{237} See chapter one, section one.
\textsuperscript{238} Ishikawa, 1998: 91.
\textsuperscript{239} Cited in Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 176.
described above, Deshimaru presents a master who is concerned with respecting all
human beings. From this letter, he quotes the following lines:

In this moment, humanity is in a critical situation. I wish, through
zazen, to be able to bring it back on the right track and into
stability. Our country is at war, but you should still try to see
beyond your own frontiers, and to love men with whom you live
at the moment. Everyone who does zazen is my disciple.\textsuperscript{240}

This positive depiction of his master shows Sawaki’s concern for the rest of humanity,
along with zazen as the solution for its troubles. The idea of seeing beyond one’s
frontiers is particularly surprising from a master who was infamous for nationalistic lines
such as “Invoke the power of the emperor; invoke the power of the military banner.”\textsuperscript{241}
Deshimaru’s description demonstrates, therefore, his will to show his master in a different
light.

Deshimaru does not discuss either the involvement of Sawaki during the Russo-Japanese war or his nationalistic rhetoric. Instead, he emphasizes the moral support from
his master, arguing that it inspired him to do good deeds even if it went against the will of
the Japanese army. For example, in the preface to one of his early works, \textit{Vrai Zen: Source vive révolution intérieure}, published in 1969, he cites a letter\textsuperscript{242} from his master as
the source of his resolution to help Chinese, Indonesians, and Europeans to get out of
prison. This letter contained the following words: “Love them all, beyond nationalities.
They are all my brothers. I hope to teach \textit{zazen} to all peoples of the world. I hope that

\textsuperscript{240} Deshimaru, 1977: 160.
\textsuperscript{241} Cited in Victoria, 1997 [2006]: 175-176 (through the words of Hakayama).
\textsuperscript{242} Whether this is the same letter as the one mentioned above is unknown, but due to the similarities in the
topic, it is highly probable. Even if it were the same letter, however, the content is pertinent to cite since it
is one of the rare occasions where Deshimaru shares his master’s perceptions on the topic of the war.
this war will stop, to be able to bring peace to spirits.\textsuperscript{243} This contradictory picture of Sawaki as both fierce nationalist and tolerant teacher, therefore, confirms the type of ideal Deshimaru is attempting to promote to his followers. Although we might not be able to solve the contradictions involved in the double discourse of Sawaki,\textsuperscript{244} what can be concluded is that while writing his autobiography in the 1970s, Deshimaru attributed an ideal, nonviolent stance to his master. And this ideal is what he presented to his followers.

3. Autobiography as Hagiography/Apology

That Deshimaru’s presentation of his nonviolent stance was successfully transmitted to his disciples is illustrated in the writings of Philippe Coupey, an American who followed Deshimaru and published some of his oral teachings in a work entitled \textit{La voix de la vallée}.\textsuperscript{245} In his introduction to this work, Coupey redeems Deshimaru’s participation in the war through the following account of his experience in Indonesia:

Having arrived on Bangka island, near Sumatra, Deshimaru taught the practice of \textit{zazen} to its inhabitants, Chinese, Indonesians, and Europeans. Saddened and scandalized by the behavior of his peers (the occupying Japanese army was torturing and executing without discrimination many natives), Deshimaru upheld actively the cause of the islanders. Denounced as resister, he was thrown into prison. Despite disease, suffocating heat, flies, dirt, lack of water and food, and his own condemnation to death,

\textsuperscript{243} Deshimaru, 1969: 32-33.
\textsuperscript{244} A contrast between a public stance for the government and a private discourse for his disciple could be an interesting path to explore, but it lies beyond the scope of this thesis.
\textsuperscript{245} Published in 1984, this work is a transcription of Deshimaru’s teachings during four nine-day \textit{sesshins} that took place in Val d’Isère, France, in the summer of 1977. It is also the first book that published Deshimaru’s teachings in the English language originally. I have unfortunately only had access to its French translation, and therefore all citations are my translation from the French.
he remained sitting in his cell, facing the wall, wearing his Master’s rakusu.246 Such an idealistic summary of Deshimaru’s stay in Indonesia supports the conclusion, at least in this particular case, that Deshimaru’s autobiography, and probably his oral discourse concerning the same events, were successfully assimilated and promoted by his followers in Europe. This presentation, furthermore, participates in spreading an image of Zen Buddhism that is fundamentally nonviolent and tolerant. Especially because Deshimaru addresses his behaviour during a time of conflict, this ideal is amplified and thus acts as a model for his followers.

Deshimaru’s positive presentation of Sawaki was also adopted by his disciples, as seen, again, in Coupey’s writings. The latter relates the events that happened before Deshimaru’s departure for Indonesia, and cites Sawaki’s words: “We are probably going to lose the war. Our nation will be destroyed, our people annihilated... Maybe this is the last time that we will see each other. Whatever happens, love all humanity without distinction of race or belief.”247 Once more, the Sawaki presented here is one who can see beyond the nationalistic discourse of his country, and who encourages his disciple to see everyone as his equal. Since Deshimaru left for Indonesia in 1941, which would be before Sawaki’s text expressing that whether one kills or not, the precept against killing is preserved, it is hard to explain the discrepancy between Sawaki’s public war discourse

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246 In Deshimaru, 1984: 37. A rakusu is a small garment worn around the neck by Zen Buddhists who have taken the precepts. The rakusu in this citation is Sawaki’s, which he gave to his disciples before Deshimaru’s departure for Indonesia. In Deshimaru’s autobiography, he asks his master for the rakusu and, after a first refusal and some hesitation, Sawaki agrees to his demand (1977: 135).

247 Cited in Deshimaru, 1984: 36. These words from Sawaki are not mentioned in the autobiography. In the latter work, at the time of Deshimaru’s departure, Sawaki agrees to give his rakusu to Deshimaru and says: “Well, take it! By wearing it, you will become a hero pushed by fate’s caprices et you will never stop. I never separated myself from it since my trip in China” (Deshimaru, 1977: 135).
and Deshimaru’s presentation of the same individual to his followers. Rather than depicting a Sawaki who changed his discourse in the forties, this presentation reflects a conscious decision to present his master in a positive, nonviolent way.

In order to shed light on Deshimaru’s presentation of his actions and his master’s words, we must consider the context in which Deshimaru wrote his autobiography. According to his own account, he wrote this work during the 1970s while living in Paris. He did not initially intend to publish it, but rather wrote out of nostalgia for the past, simply for himself. It is only in response to the demands of a Japanese publishing company, who, in Deshimaru’s words, “wished to provide spiritual sustenance to a disoriented youth,” that he published it, first in Japanese and then in French.248 Beyond this information about the time and place of his writings, Deshimaru also mentions a few details about what he wished to express in his writing. In the postscript, he writes: “... in parallel to the tribulations and vicissitudes of my life, I tried to describe the evolution of my spiritual thought.”249 Instead of treating Deshimaru’s autobiography as a series of related facts, therefore, one must give attention to the elements he included to illustrate his spiritual growth. One way of doing so is to treat his autobiography and its retelling by followers as a sacred biography, or hagiography.250

The various versions of the story of the Buddha attest to the importance of biographies in the Buddhist tradition. Through the telling of his previous lives as a

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250 The decision to categorize Deshimaru’s life story as biography or hagiography can be debated, but as Faure argues: “...the biographical process is in most cases only an unconscious duplication of the hagiographical process” (1986: 188).
bodhisattva, or narrating his life as he became Śākyamuni Buddha, not only are great stories produced and disseminated, but, most importantly, religious meaning is created. In her introduction to an edited volume on sacred biographies of Buddhism, anthropologist Juliane Schober formulates this aspect in the following words: “In Buddhism, biographical episodes function as frames of reference that map thematic configurations onto divergent trajectories of time and place.” In the Chan and Zen traditions, sacred biographies also abound, presenting the lives of its great figures. For example, one can find in Daoxuan’s (596-667) Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks (645-664) an account of the life of Bodhidharma. Rather than reading his life as historical material, however, Faure demonstrates that it is more fruitful to read elements in such stories as literary device, and descriptions of great figures as textual paradigms. It is thus by giving attention to literary details and the context of these works that one gains the most useful information concerning their relevance for the tradition. In a similar vein, certain literary elements in Deshimaru’s autobiography work to produce meaning for his followers. For example, his constant practice of zazen, his return to important Buddhist books to go through times of trouble, and his relation with his master are all important elements that can shape his followers’ views of their practice and

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251 For his previous lives, see the Jātakas (an early Pāli collection was compiled by an unknown author in the fifth century CE [Davids, 1880: lxxvii]). For biographies of his life as the Buddha, see, for example, the Lalitavistara (an anonymous compilation edited before the ninth century CE [Winternitz, 1933 (1972): 253-254]), the Buddhacarita (attributed to Asvaghosa, second century CE [Olivelle, 2008: xxii]), and the Mahāvastu (attributed to the Lokottaravādin branch of the Mahāsāṃghikas, with sections dating from the second century BCE but probably completed in the fourth century CE [Winternitz, 1933 (1972): 239-247]).

252 Schober, 1997: 12.

beliefs. This is true of his depiction of his own wartime activities and the discourse of his master, which work to produce a narrative redeeming his participation in the war. In this case, the way he relates the events creates a distance between his Zen and the mainstream war rhetoric of the Buddhist sects at the time. Such a reading of his work does not seek to downplay its relevance as legend or myth, but rather to shed light on its religious meaning.

That Deshimaru’s story can be treated as a sacred biography is also demonstrated by the presence of extraordinary events, and even one that is close to being miraculous. This event is not narrated by Deshimaru in his autobiography, but rather in the retelling of his story by Coupey in his preface to *La voix de la vallée*. In this anecdote, traveling from Bangka to Billiton Island, Deshimaru’s boat is hit by the American army. Thrown in the ocean without a lifejacket, he is rescued twenty-four hours later by the Japanese navy. Commenting on this event, Coupey writes: “Although his clothes were shredded, the rakusu was intact. And the notes of his Master, while written in ink, were as fresh and clear as they were on the first day.” The introduction of a miracle, or at least an extraordinary event, in the retelling of Deshimaru’s life hints at the manner in which his story should be treated. Rather than approaching it as a series of historical events plainly demonstrating his acts in Indonesia, one should read it as a narration crafted to present meaningful events in his life. Given the context of his actions, even his distance from the

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254 Given that they read his book, obviously (I met at least two practitioners who mentioned this book). However, elements of his autobiography are also found in oral teachings and writings by his disciples, as mentioned above in the writings of Philippe Coupey. Since this chapter addresses Deshimaru’s wartime behavior, other elements of his teachings found in his autobiographical writings will be addressed in chapter three.

255 Deshimaru, 1984: 38.
pro-war rhetoric of his time could be treated as “extraordinary,” and hence contribute to elevating Deshimaru’s status as a legendary Zen master in the eyes of his followers.

When situated in its historical context, Deshimaru’s autobiography can also be read as a strategic literary device to deal with the topic of his war participation. Just as other Zen teachers in the West, Asian or not, he had to face the condemnation of Buddhist support for the war. Offering his own individual actions as detached from the pro-war rhetoric of his sect and presenting Sawaki under a rather positive light, therefore, Deshimaru employs narrative to redeem his lineage. This strategy can be compared to other Zen teachers’ strategies in the West. For example, Robert Aitken, although a radical pacifist, had to deal with his tradition’s past and military activities. When Yasutani Hakuun, invited to a sesshin in Honolulu, advised a man to follow his country’s demands to participate in the Vietnam War, Aitken had to justify the master’s answer by talking about the difference of culture and karma. Rather than trying to distance his lineage from the Buddhist war rhetoric, therefore, he attempted to offer explanations for its rise. Avoiding the topic most of the time, he also used the strategy of silence, as related by Tworkov: “He had also learned from the Japanese something of the diplomacy of discretion; familiar with the political allegiances of most Japanese teachers, he had long ago concluded that certain activities were simply not discussed.” While this is only one instance among various strategies to deal with the Buddhist support for the war, it demonstrates an important perspective in which Deshimaru’s writings must be read.

256 Tworkov, 1989 [1994]: 42.
257 Tworkov, 1989 [1994]: 42.
Conclusion

The different elements that emerge when reading Deshimaru’s autobiography in its historical context help us to understand an important aspect of his construction of an ideal of nonviolence. Beyond the distancing from Buddhist pro-war rhetoric, Deshimaru’s autobiography also works as a potential model of nonviolent action. While he probably did not intend to produce such a model,\textsuperscript{258} when read in a Western context, his autobiographical writings fit the modern popular understanding of Buddhism as a nonviolent tradition.\textsuperscript{259} From a different perspective, being written in the 1970s, Deshimaru’s work is also a product of this view of Buddhism. In this sense, Deshimaru is both responding to values of nonviolence, peace, and activism stressed in modern Buddhist literature and creating a modern discourse for his brand of Zen at the same time.

\textsuperscript{258} That Deshimaru was not an exemplar of nonviolence is beyond doubt. For example, he ate meat, and reportedly took a certain pleasure in throwing live crabs in the boiling water himself and then making fun of his scandalized disciples while inventing a \textit{mantra} to help the crabs attain a better rebirth (in de Smedt, 1985 [2005]: 166). I will say more about Deshimaru’s precept-breaking behaviour in chapter three below.

\textsuperscript{259} See chapter one. See also Faure, 2009: 93-99, where the author discusses the popular received idea that “Buddhism is a peaceful religion.”
CHAPTER 3: The Association Zen de Montréal

Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce the Association Zen de Montréal by first looking at the arrival of Deshimaru in France and contextualizing his foundation of the Association Zen Internationale within the development of Zen in Europe. I then move to some basic characteristics of the AZI that made it popular in Europe, namely Deshimaru’s personality and his emphasis on zazen. Finally, I present the AZM by addressing Zen in the province of Québec and the foundation of the dojo in Montréal. I will follow with a brief ethnographic portrait of the dojo, providing basic information about its teachings and practices, as well as who practices there. I will do so by focusing on the AZM’s presentation of zazen, other practices such as ceremonies, and their relation to Buddhism and its institutions.

1. Zen in Europe

1.1. Beginnings

While it would be beyond the scope of this chapter to offer an exhaustive account of the development of Zen Buddhism in Europe, it is nevertheless relevant to trace some of its broad historical outlines to help situate the AZI. The encounter of Europeans with Zen Buddhism goes as far back as the Christian missionary years in Japan. The first descriptions of Japanese Buddhist practices sent to Europe were by Francis Xavier (1506-

260 This Japanese word is used by practitioners at the AZM to refer to the centre. For a definition of the term, see introduction, fn. 61.
1552), a Spanish missionary.\(^{261}\) Another missionary, a Portuguese named Christovao Ferreira (1580-1650), is said to have converted to Zen during the Christian persecutions and even wrote a pamphlet against Christianity.\(^{262}\) This early exploration of Japanese Buddhism, soon stopped by the political situation in Japan, would only start again in the Meiji period. Indeed, it was only when Japan opened its borders and sent Japanese priests abroad to learn about Western culture and present Buddhism to the West that Japanese Zen Buddhism continued its spread in Europe and America.\(^{263}\) By that time, the study of Buddhist texts was well underway in Europe, thanks to individuals such as ethnologist Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800-1894), philologist Eugène Burnouf (1801-1852), and philosopher and statesman Jules Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire (1805-1895).\(^{264}\) During the second half of the nineteenth century in Europe, knowledge concerning the Buddhist tradition was mostly based on Pāli texts, which came to be considered as representing an older, and therefore “purer,” Buddhism. Partly responsible for this development were British founder of the Pāli Text Society T.W. Rhys Davids (1843-1922) and German philologist Hermann Oldenberg (1854-1920).\(^{265}\) It is in such a context that “an elite circle

\(^{263}\) The first Japanese priests to sail from Japan to Europe in 1872 were from the Nishihongan-ji and Higashihongan-ji branches of the Shin sect and their main purpose in Europe was to acquire knowledge about European socio-political history and culture (Ketelaar, 1990: 126). Another marking event in the spread of Zen Buddhism in the West was the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago, during which Japanese priests from different sects presented their version of Buddhism to the world. Snodgrass describes this type of Buddhism as “‘Eastern Buddhism,’ a repackaging for a Western audience of shin butkyō, a philosophical, rationalized and socially committed interpretation of Buddhism that emerged from the restructuring of Buddhism and its role in Japanese society necessitated by the religious policy of early Meiji government” (Snodgrass, 2003: 115). See also Ketelaar, 1990: 136-173, and discussion below.
\(^{264}\) Bauman, 2000: 10. See also Lopez, 1995: 2-5.
\(^{265}\) Bauman, 2000: 11.
of internationally minded Japanese intellectuals and globe-trotting Zen priests brought the Zen Buddhist tradition to the West and shaped the Western perspective on the matter.

As mentioned in chapters one and two, the type of Buddhism that emerged during the Meiji period was characterized by a concern to make the tradition fit with the modern nationalistic ideals of Japan. Responding to trying years during which Buddhism was labeled a foreign and decadent institution posing an obstacle to the development of Japan into a modern nation, Buddhist intellectuals sought to reform their tradition. The discourse that emerged was a presentation of Japanese Buddhism as “an uncompromisingly empirical, rational, and scientific mode of inquiry into the nature of things” that represented “the most evolutionary advanced form of the Buddha’s teaching.” It is this version of Buddhism, or New Buddhism (shin-bukkyō), that characterized the type of Zen Buddhism that reached the West during and after the Meiji period. Important proponents of Japanese Zen in the West were Rinzai priest Shaku Soen (1859-1919), who participated in the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and his students D. T. Suzuki (1870-1966), whose prolific works on Zen left a deep impact on the way in which it would be understood in the West. The legacy of Suzuki, as well as other Japanese intellectuals such as Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945), Hisamatsu Shin’ichi (1889-1980), and Nishitani Keiji (1900-1990) was a presentation of Zen highly influenced by the European discourse on the value of “experience,” promoted by Westerners such as German philosopher and theologian Friedrich Daniel Ernst.

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266 Sharf, 1995a: 108.
267 Sharf, 1995a: 109. See also chapter two.
268 Sharf, 1995a: 111.
269 Sharf, 1995a: 110.
Schleiermacher (1768-1834), German scholar Rudolf Otto (1869-1937), and American philosopher and psychologist William James (1842-1910).\textsuperscript{270} Presented as a transcultural experience, Zen was freed, as it were, from its institutional apparatus. Such “essential” Zen appealed to many Europeans and Americans alike. As Sharf notes, however, it is important to remember that “those aspects of Zen most attractive to the Occident ... were derived in large part from Occidental sources.”\textsuperscript{271} Nevertheless, it is this particular image of Zen that was first displayed to the West, and through the same token left a lasting impact on the way Zen would be perceived in the West from then on.

In Europe, a Japanese Zen monk named Tai Sue (dates unknown) apparently attempted to start a Buddhist institute shortly after World War I.\textsuperscript{272} However, his mission failed and it is only later, during the 1960s and 1970s, that what has been called a “Zen boom” took place in Europe.\textsuperscript{273} In this period, Zen Buddhist teachers arrived in Europe, responding to a strong demand caused by the popularization of Zen by Suzuki and others. As in America,\textsuperscript{274} the first founders of Zen centers were Asian missionaries, with lay Rinzai leader Nagaya Kiichi (1895-1993), who started teaching in Germany in 1965, and Sōtō monk Taisen Deshimaru (1914-1982), who arrived in France in 1967.\textsuperscript{275} Apart from the Japanese Zen tradition, other notable Zen teachers were the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh (b. 1926), who arrived in France in 1966, and the Korean monk Seung Sahn

\begin{footnotes}
\item[270] Sharf, 1995a: 135.
\item[271] Sharf, 1995a: 140.
\item[272] Lenoir, 1999b: 278.
\item[273] Koné, 2001: 143.
\item[274] Notable early Asian missionaries in America were Shaku Sōen and Senzaki Nyōgen for the Rinzai sect, Suzuki Shunryū for the Sōtō sect, and Maezumi Taizan (1931-1995) for the more recent Sanbōkyōdan sect (See Fields, 1981 [1986]: 168-272).
\end{footnotes}
(1927-2004), from the Kwan Um Zen school, who started teaching in the 1970s. These teachers founded various centers, thus establishing a new step in the dissemination of Zen in Europe by allowing Western enthusiasts to have personal encounters with a teacher. Nevertheless, it is important to note that these teachers taught a Zen adapted to their Western audience. Furthermore, at least in the case of Japanese Zen, these new proponents were often very critical of the state of the tradition in their home countries, and theirs was thus a Zen they sought to reform. Since it would be beyond the scope of this chapter to present the background and activities of each individual, I will here focus on the case of Deshimaru.

1.2. Deshimaru’s Mission and Lineage

In the literature of the AZI, founded by Deshimaru, a recurring theme is the teacher’s desire to implant “true Zen” in the West. This assertion of an authentic Zen not only echoes earlier proponents of Zen who reduced the tradition to an essential, core experience, but also Deshimaru’s own master’s criticism of the state of the Sōtō sect in Japan. Indeed, after ordaining Deshimaru at the age of fifty-three years old, Sawaki is related to have told him:

In India during the time of Bodhidharma, Buddhism was in a state of decadence. So Bodhidharma’s teacher told him to take the

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Dharma to the East. Likewise in Japan, Buddhism is now dead. And so you, my Dharma heir, who know the true teachings of the Buddha, take them to the West so that Buddhism may again flourish.\(^{279}\)

It is within such teleological paradigms that Deshimaru understood and presented his mission in Europe. Before presenting the AZI and its branch group the AZM, it is therefore important to give attention to the circumstances of Deshimaru’s arrival and stay. This information will, in turn, shed light on the concerns of the master and the type of teaching he disseminated to his followers.

Deshimaru associated his teachings with Sawaki whom, according to some versions of the story, he followed for thirty years except for a period during the war.\(^{280}\) While this attribution of a close master-disciple relation may not be far from the truth, it is also pertinent to add that Deshimaru was married and had children before he left for Europe.\(^{281}\) His ordination and mission, therefore, only took place later in his life, when, near his deathbed, Sawaki finally agreed to ordain him as a monk.\(^{282}\) From the literature of the AZI, this refusal to ordain Deshimaru was due to Sawaki’s desire to let him “have the experience of people who were not isolated by the monastic life” so that “he would be able to offer a teaching that was more relevant to them.”\(^{283}\) Deshimaru also cites his master’s response when he asked to be ordained for the first time in the following words:

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\(^{279}\) Cited in Batchelor, 1994: 122.

\(^{280}\) For example, Deshimaru, 1984: 16 (“In memoriam” by Philippe Coupey).

\(^{281}\) Details about his children are usually not provided. However, de Smedt presents the situation in the following way: “he abandoned the world of affairs, shaved his head, said goodbye to his family life and his five big kids born from two beds” (de Smedt, 1985 [2005]: 64). Additionally, a letter of criticism to the teachers at the AZI mentions that he was the father of four children, including two illegitimate ones (Pelayo, 1999).

\(^{282}\) Lenoir, 1999b: 279. This was in 1965.

\(^{283}\) Deshimaru, 1981 [1985]: vii (in translator Nancy Champoux’s note).
“You will not bury your life in these temples of bureaucratic prelates! It is better that you become a true bodhisattva who continues zazen in the dirt of the social world.”

Deshimaru’s lay career as a married man with children, therefore, is valued in the group’s literature as having given him the experience to deal properly with the problems of everyday life. In light of the type of Zen that was brought to the West, Deshimaru’s path thus goes hand in hand with the emphasis on the practice of zazen over and above institutional belonging or monastic practices. In turn, such a path first nurtured and then became what he called “true Zen.”

Deshimaru’s teacher, Sawaki, must also be addressed as one of the factors that contributed to his particular articulation of Zen. Putting his associations with the pro-war rhetoric of his sect aside, Sawaki has been known, at least in the West, as a reformer of the Sōtō school who sought to go back to Dōgen’s teaching by emphasizing the practice of zazen. In his presentation of *La pratique du Zen*, Vincent Bardet describes Sawaki as a “bold reformer who came back to the pure teaching of Dogen … namely to the very source of Zen: the practice of zazen, which is the Awakening itself.” After teaching at Komazawa University, Sawaki also became abbot of Antaiji, a Sōtō Zen temple located in Kyoto and known for its acceptance of Western disciples and emphasis on the practice of zazen. Arthur Braverman, an American who practiced in this temple, imagines Sawaki:

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285 Discussed in chapter two.
287 For example, Braverman writes: “Antaiji became a temple for students to practice Zen without the distractions most temples in Japan took for granted—parishioners needs such as funerals, memorial serves, religious holidays, and in some cases weddings” (2003: 15).
He is a rebel—badmouthing the Zen institutions with their lazy clerics. But most of all, he is waving a banner for *zazen*—the *zazen* known as *shikan taza*, or just sitting, a *zazen* that he insists has absolutely no value in the sense of progress, benefits, or in, his everyday language, “paybacks.” “Because it takes you out of the world of loss and gain,” he says, “it should be practiced.”

Sawaki’s criticism and insistence on *zazen* are not only both adopted by Deshimaru in his teaching in Europe, but also presented as the only true Zen. Again, this specific presentation of Zen as a meditative practice to the exclusion of other elements of the tradition must be qualified in its modern context. Indeed, it is closely related to a discourse in which going back to this practice of seated meditation is considered a return to a “pure” Zen, in imitation of the Buddha’s enlightenment experience under the Bodhi tree. It is important to distinguish, nevertheless, Sawaki’s emphasis on *zazen* from the modern insistence on *satori* or *kenshō*. “Just sitting,” here, is proposed not as a means to an end, but as an end in itself. The search for epistemological certainty through meditation is thus related to *zazen* itself. In chapter four, I demonstrate one of the ways in which Deshimaru participated in the discourse on meditative experience as the true way of seeing things, and for which he used the term *hishiryo*. Following this idea, Deshimaru affirmed that the very origin of Zen Buddhism was “[w]hen Buddha woke up under the Bodhi tree.”

289 This presentation of his Zen as “true Zen” is criticized by Pelayo, a former member of the AZI, as “particularly revealing of a sectarian way of presenting Zen” (1999).
290 As presented in Sharf 1995b.
291 See chapter four below.
292 Deshimaru, 1981 [1985]: 3. In the same work, he teaches: “Zen means going directly back to the mind of Buddha, who experienced satori under the Bodhi tree” (115).
Deshimaru’s move to Europe is often presented as a mission similar to that of legendary Chan/Zen founder Bodhidharma. In de Smedt’s biography, Deshimaru affirms: “Me too, since I have been in Europe, I continued day after day like Bodhidharma for nine years. Probably even more than Bodhidharma.” This ambitious view is adopted by his followers, as demonstrated, for example, in a translator’s note calling him “the first Zen patriarch of the West.” Apart from affirming the validity of his teachings by connecting him to an important lineage, these associations with Bodhidharma also present Deshimaru’s coming to Europe as the latest step in the spread of Zen Buddhism. Certain historical details, nevertheless, should be mentioned concerning his path. Deshimaru’s first intention had been to teach Zen in America, and it was in response to the demands of a group of French “Zen macrobiotic” adepts that he planned his departure for France. He initially lived in poverty, but soon gained popularity and was able to establish his first dojō in Paris in 1972. Furthermore, while he is often presented as an individual sent in Europe by the Sōtō sect to enlighten the West, his status as kaikyōsōkan, or Sōtō missionary responsible for Europe and Africa, was a later attribution, given to him in 1975 by the Japanese authorities.

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293 de Smedt, 1985 [2005]: 176.
294 In Deshimaru, 1981 [1985]: x.
295 Deshimaru’s lineage is addressed below.
296 Lenoir, 1999b: 278. He had taught zazen to these individuals at Teishoji in 1966 (Deshimaru, 1969: 134). There is a discrepancy between Lenoir’s and Deshimaru’s accounts of the events. According to Lenoir, an adept gave his address to Deshimaru while in Japan and was surprised to see him arrive at his home with only his zafu, kesa, and his master’s notebooks as luggage (1999b: 279). In one of Deshimaru’s tellings of the story, he was rather invited by the adepts of the same group (1969: 134).
297 Lenoir, 1999b: 280. For example, editors of one of his works mention that he was the first to be sent in Europe by Sōtōshū (Deshimaru, 1969: 11). Bardet, in his presentation to La pratique du Zen, insists on this authority: “Master Deshimaru arrives in Paris toward the end of the year 1967, with a mandate for all Europe from Soto Zen, and sustained by all Zen schools in Japan” (in Deshimaru, 1974 [1975, 1977, 1981]:
Beyond this type of institutional recognition, it is clear even from a cursory look at the literature of the AZI that for Deshimaru and his followers, lineage is an important aspect of their tradition. The importance of Deshimaru’s lineage is often emphasized by giving Sawaki a position of high authority in Japan. For example, in an introduction to one of Deshimaru’s works, the editors describe Sawaki as the highest authority in Japan since the death of Dōgen. Furthermore, Deshimaru’s connection to a lineage of teachers going as far back as the Buddha is often mentioned, with or without the details of his own transmission. Some versions of the events simply mention that Sawaki, on his deathbed, made Deshimaru his successor by giving him the transmission, called *shiho*. Other versions, however, specify the fact that Deshimaru’s *shiho* was officially given by Yamada Zenji (1889-1979), or Yamada Reirin, then abbot of Eiheiji, and not Sawaki himself. Nevertheless, his spiritual (as opposed to official) lineage is upheld by his followers. The most frequently cited evidence for this transmission is Sawaki’s gift of his *kesas* and bowls to Deshimaru before he died. What is not mentioned in this account of Deshimaru’s lineage is Sawaki’s other disciples, who equally received transmission from him. For example, important disciples of Sawaki were Narita Shūyū (1914-2004), who received *shiho* from Sawaki, and Kōshō Uchiyama (1912-1999), who was his official successor.

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299 Deshimaru, 1969: 11.
302 Coupey’s “In Memoriam” and “Introduction” in Deshimaru, 1984: 16, 38. The *kesa* is a garment worn by monks, and symbolises transmission from master to disciple (Deshimaru, 1984: 255).
303 Lenoir, 1999b: 281. See also the website of Ludger Tenryu Tenbreul, a German disciple of Deshimaru who separated from the AZI and founded his own center: Zen-Vereinigung Deutschland e.V., “Teachers,” http://www.zen-vereinigung.de/p69.shtml. Narita gave *shiho* in 1983 to Taiten Guareschi, who teaches Zen in Italy, in 1986 to Ludger Tenryu Tenbreul, who teaches in Germany, and in 1987 to Dokushō Villalba.
successor since he inherited the abbotship of Antaiji from Sawaki. By claiming Sawaki’s lineage, therefore, Deshimaru established himself as heir to a rich tradition and the vessel for its proper transmission to the West. At the same time, such a claim participates in producing an idealistic lineage selective with its historical details, an act that echoes earlier constructions of lineages in the Zen tradition.

2. Association Zen Internationale: Deshimaru’s Teachings and Legacy

An ethnographic picture of the Association Zen de Montréal would not be complete without first addressing its mother organization, the Association Zen Internationale, founded in 1979 by Deshimaru. While this group included more than a hundred dōjōs in several countries by the time of Deshimaru’s death, in his sociological study, La Rencontre du bouddhisme et de l’Occident, Lenoir raised this number to two hundred by 1999. In terms of the representation of Deshimaru’s Zen in Europe, it was estimated by Koné in 2001 that around eleven percent of Zen centres in all Europe were who teaches in Spain. See also Comunidad Budista Soto Zen, “Linaje y transmisión,” http://www.budismozen.es/php/mod/resource/view.php?id=99.

Braverman, 2003: 8. Although Sawaki was officially abbot of Antaiji, he never stayed at that location until he became too sick to travel. As a token of his traveling lifestyle, his nickname was “homeless Kōdō” (Braverman, 2003: 8).

For example, Faure demonstrates that although Chan lineages claimed to go back to the Buddha himself, the first mention of a Chinese patriarchal lineage only appeared in the seventh century CE (Faure, 1997: 96). In Japan, Bodiford notes, “the ritual manipulation of Dharma transmission attained its most extreme expression in the institutionalization of Sōtō temple Dharma lineages (garanbō)” (Bodiford, 1991: 429). Deshimaru’s lineage is depicted in Deshimaru, 1984: 22-23. See appendix B.


Lenoir, 1999b: 280.
related to his teaching. The AZI boasts centres in many countries around the world, including twelve European countries, Canada, and the United States. The number of practitioners who have participated in the group’s activities from its origins to the year 1999 was around fifteen thousand, with two thousand active members in the same year. Its headquarters are situated in La Gendronnière, a temple founded by Deshimaru in 1980 near Blois in France’s Val-de-Loire region, and labeled by Lenoir the biggest Sōtō Zen temple in the world. During its first summer alone, it is estimated that a total of five thousand individuals from all Europe frequented its sesshins. These retreats are still organized at this temple, and attract hundreds of practitioners from different parts of the world every year. Many of the more serious practitioners at the AZM, in fact, spend part of their summers in “La Gendro,” the name they use to refer to the temple.

2.1. Personality

In his sociological study of convert Buddhism in France, entitled Le bouddhisme en France, Lenoir notes that two major factors for Deshimaru’s success in establishing

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308 Koné, 2001: 146. It is to be noted that these groups do not all belong to the AZI, since some are led by former disciples of Deshimaru who severed their ties with the association. Koné estimates further that such groups consist of about twenty percent of all Deshimaru-related groups.

309 See AZI, “Lieux de pratique,” http://www.zen-azi.org/spip.php?article39. This topography, retrieved from the website of the AZI, obviously does not include centres founded by teachers related to Deshimaru but who severed their ties with the AZI. For example, Stéphane Thibault’s website indicates that his group has also centres in South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Chili, and Uruguay) and in the Caribbean (Cuba and Guadeloupe). See Zen: Lignée de Deshimaru, “Listing of dojos,” http://www.zendeshimaru.com/EN/sangha/dojo-list.html.

310 Lenoir, 1999a: 86.

311 Lenoir, 1999b: 280.

312 Lenoir, 1999b: 280.

centres and disseminating Zen in Europe were his personality and his emphasis on zazen.\textsuperscript{314} First, the attraction of his personality is not only demonstrated by the ways in which biographers, editors, and practitioners relate to him, but also in the problems of authority encountered by his association after he passed away. While an attempt to encompass all the details of his personality would be impossible, mentioning a few descriptions by close disciples will at least give a taste of the way he was perceived as a master. One of the first things to notice in these descriptions is the range of different epithets used to qualify his personality. Coupey, in a memoriam to his master, uses French author Rabelais’ carnivalesque character Pantagruel side by side with skeptical French author Montaigne to illustrate this variety:

\begin{quote}
He was a Pantagruel with a nuance of Montaigne.... He could be puritan, or machiavellian, but he remained always concentrated and orthodox. He was the friend, the competent professor, the wise man. He was in fact the enchanter of man and beast, and all those who were following him liked him.\textsuperscript{315}
\end{quote}

What Coupey means by “orthodox” in this case is unclear, especially in light of more critical views of Deshimaru, which I provide below. Nevertheless, Coupey’s description conveys a sense of admiration for the different aspects of his master’s personality. A similar account is provided in the translator’s note to another of Deshimaru’s works: “Deshimaru’s personality was unique: blustery, sensitive, truculent, subtle, and inimitable. Its greatest strength lay in the boundless universal energy he transmitted, and in itself there is nothing inimitable about that....”\textsuperscript{316} In both views, therefore, what emerges is the

\textsuperscript{314} Lenoir, 1999b: 280.  
\textsuperscript{315} Coupey’s “In Memoriam,” in Deshimaru, 1984: 17.  
\textsuperscript{316} Translator’s note, in Deshimaru, 1981 [1985]: viii.
image of a master whose complex personality and energetic style attracted many individuals (and animals in the case of Coupey’s description).

Along with this attractive energy came bursts of anger and a somewhat unpredictable behaviour. However, this aspect of Deshimaru’s personality does not seem to have bothered those who followed him. For example, Jacques Brosse, a close disciple, wrote the following about his master:

From him emanated a magnetic, intense, even incandescent energy, to which no one could remain insensitive. His fits of anger, his implacable determination, and the roughness of his language, always direct, made him dreadful and sometimes shocking. But after being angry, Sensei would burst out laughing and invite you to drink. How could anyone be angry him? He touched justly, always to the sensitive point that he detected right away and we would quickly understand that his apparent brutality was, in fact, compassion. 317

Deshimaru’s anger and drinking activities, here, are presented in a positive light, as a certain "skilful means" that attracted many individuals. Such aspects of his character, along with his life as a layman before his ordination, are also used by followers to demonstrate his humaneness. A French woman interviewed by Lenoir, in fact, shared the following: “Nobody explains to you what a formidable man Deshimaru was. On the other hand, Buddhist disciples tell you that he spent his time getting drunk, having sex with women, and that he died from cancer. I find that extremely healthy.” 318 Such an account reveals a certain pride on the part of Deshimaru’s followers to present their master’s epicurean side. They may find in him similarities with popular depictions of

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317 Cited in Lenoir, 1999b: 283 (my translation). I will come back to Deshimaru’s anger as compassion in the following chapter.

318 Lenoir, 1999a: 69 (my translation).
monks whose antinomian behaviour is a manifestation of their liberation.\footnote{319 See discussion in Sharf, 1995c: 43.} On one side, namely the side of the followers in Europe, Deshimaru’s excesses and bursting energy were aspects of his personality that gave him authority as a Zen master.

On the other hand, certain individuals also publicly criticized Deshimaru’s behaviour as providing a negative model for followers. For example, Jean-Pierre Schnetzler, disciple of Deshimaru for five years before becoming a disciple of Kalu rinpoche (1905-1989), a Tibetan teacher, affirms: “...he was too much of a fundamentalist of the posture for my taste, and probably not a model of abstinence. It was probably easier for certain disciples to imitate him by drinking whisky... which is quite far from exhausting the wisdom of Zen!”\footnote{320 In their criticisms of the AZI, both Halfmann and Pelayo mention Deshimaru’s immoderate drinking as a negative aspect of the master’s behaviour.\footnote{321 See Halfmann 1999 and Pelayo 1999.} This particular side of Deshimaru, therefore, was not appreciated equally by all individuals. On this topic, it must be noted that Sawaki, in an early encounter with Deshimaru at Sojiji, got him drunk with Japanese strong alcohol. When Deshimaru mentioned that above the temple door it was written that no alcohol or garlic could enter through it, Sawaki answered: “Do not worry. This sake entered through the back door.”\footnote{322 Deshimaru uses this anecdote to teach that one can drink, but in a moderate way only.\footnote{323 Such an attitude toward alcohol, in fact, is presented as a}.

\footnote{323 For example, Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 171, 185. Note, however, that Sawaki certainly did not make him drink moderately, as he got Deshimaru so drunk that the latter stumbled out of the temple and ended up lying in dog feces on the ground (See Deshimaru, 1977: 90).}

\footnote{319 See discussion in Sharf, 1995c: 43.}

\footnote{320 Cited in Lenoir, 1999b: 184 (my translation).}

\footnote{321 See Halfmann 1999 and Pelayo 1999.}

\footnote{322 Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 170.}
Mahāyānist middle-way of approaching precepts, between the two extremes of abuse and total abstinence.\textsuperscript{324}

2.2. Emphasis on \textit{Zazen}: Tradition and Experience

In an attempt to explain Deshimaru's popularity, Lenoir argues that another factor was his emphasis on \textit{zazen} and his denunciation of "religious intellectualism and institutionalism."\textsuperscript{325} As mentioned briefly above, this practice was central to Deshimaru's presentation of Zen, as well as for his master Sawaki. Thus, it can be argued that \textit{zazen} gives meaning to all other elements of practice at the AZI. Part of the attraction to the practice is found in its malleability, since, although guided by the teachings of the association, every practitioner experiences \textit{zazen} individually. From his interviews with practitioners in France, Lenoir notes that this experience is important for practitioners who do not want to be told what to believe in. He concludes:

\begin{quote}
To the figure of the priest, pastor, or rabbi, who transmit what one should believe and not believe, should do and not do—briefly, dogma and norm—, [practitioners] oppose the figure of the oriental master who transmits the modalities of an experience that he realized himself.\textsuperscript{326}
\end{quote}

\textit{Zazen} is thus taught as a technique, but the experience remains individual. The practice of \textit{zazen} and its results also stand above institutional concerns such as ordination or years of monastic training. For most of Deshimaru's followers, as argued by Koné, “[s]piritual

\textsuperscript{324} For example, see Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 185.
\textsuperscript{325} Lenoir, 1999b: 280.
\textsuperscript{326} Lenoir, 1999a: 231 (my translation).
achievement is seen as more important than status as an ordained monastic. A corollary of this emphasis on experience is the devaluation of institutions, rituals, and doctrine.

As discussed by Sharf, the emphasis on “transformative personal experience” in the study of Buddhism is a modern phenomenon that does not necessarily reflect traditional Buddhist monastic practices. However, for Deshimaru (and his followers, as we will see in chapter four), transformative experience through zazen is a central concern that gives shape to his articulation of Zen. The experiential nature of zazen, furthermore, contributes to the difficulty of articulating doctrine since, once put into words, the experience becomes stuck in categories that do not reflect its true nature. Deshimaru affirms this view in the following words: “If you limit yourself to written experience you can understand Buddhism with your intellect, but if you do not practice zazen you cannot come close to the Buddha-mind or understand the experience of Buddha.”

Faithful to a Chan/Zen distrust of language, according to Deshimaru, any written account of doctrine is doomed to fail to do it justice since it is limited by words. Such downplaying of language can thus be appreciated by a Western audience suspicious of dogmatic claims.

Deshimaru’s emphasis on zazen also allows individuals to entertain a relationship with Buddhism that is not necessarily “religious.” One of Lenoir’s interviewees, a European male, argues: “Silent meditation is not a religion, it is a practice, a method of

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327 Koné, 2001: 151.
330 For example, see Faure, 1993: 195-199.
developing a spirit of goodness that we all possess within ourselves.\textsuperscript{331} Although I will demonstrate below that there are a variety of ways to relate to Buddhism within the AZM, it is still pertinent to discuss how Deshimaru’s insistence on meditative practice helps many individuals to relate more easily to the tradition. For instance, since zazen stands above other institutional or monastic concerns, Deshimaru teaches that lay practice is better than monastic practice. He says:

\begin{quote}
What is easier is to practice zazen for an hour in the morning, or even twice a day, and be free the rest of the time. That’s better! For the Japanese monks zazen is a business, a profession. But you, now, you want to practice zazen, so zazen is always fresh for you, it is not a business. When zazen becomes a business the true religious spirit dies.\textsuperscript{332}
\end{quote}

Such a criticism of the Sōtō sect in Japan echoes many Europeans’ (and, as will become clear below, Québécaurs’) problems with Christianity. By focusing on teaching a technique as opposed to a dogma, therefore, Deshimaru’s Zen allows individuals to connect to a religious tradition that does not require mandatory beliefs, except in the effectiveness of zazen.

Although it is true that Deshimaru’s emphasis on zazen teaches a practice and not a dogma, it must be noted that close relations between the master and his disciples is an important element ensuring that the practitioner attains the “right” experience. In a tradition where words are reduced to meaningless categories, another mode of communication is necessary. This mode of transmission has been dubbed “wordless

\textsuperscript{331} In Lenoir, 1999a: 198.
\textsuperscript{332} Deshimaru, 1981 [1985]: 119.
transmission from mind to mind,” or *ishin denshin* or 心伝心.* An idealized, modern
description of the Dharma transmission process, it revives a close relation with a certified
master who can judge one’s progress on the spiritual path; in this case, *zazen*. In Europe,
this relationship can be seen as a factor contributing to the success of Zen and other
traditions emphasizing the necessity to follow a particular master. Koné affirms, on that
topic: “It can be argued that Zen and Tibetan schools attract Westerners because their
emphasis on the master-disciple relationship overshadows explicitly religious aspects in
the first stages of involvement.” By meeting privately with disciples and answering
their questions in a public encounter called *mondo*, Deshimaru could thus share his
teachings without letting them become dogmatic assertions. The type of discourse used
in such teachings is spontaneous and often paradoxical, usually eluding the questioner’s
mental categories. Putting the focus of teachings upon the master, who has the capacity
to answer his disciples’ queries based on his own experience, results in creating a strong
bond between master and disciple in the group. That such a relation existed between
Deshimaru and his disciples is undeniable, as demonstrated by the problems members of
the AZI faced when the master passed away without naming someone to take his place.
The events following his death are addressed below.

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335 To these oral teachings could be added the many works of Deshimaru that are published in the form of
question-and-answer sessions. For example, Deshimaru 1984; 1981 [1985], and parts of 1977 [1983] (pp.
336 Halfmann criticizes such language, arguing that with its help, “[t]he masters masterfully undermine
the self-confidence of any questioner.” For him, “together with the group pressure,” this language causes
“the questioner to doubt his own understanding rather than the teachings of the master” (see Halfmann
1999).
2.3. Death and the Aftermath

Although this presentation of Deshimaru only briefly mentions some of his personality traits, it sketches the portrait of a man who seduced his followers by his strict emphasis on zazen and his intense, sometimes shocking, personality. The AZI, during Deshimaru’s life, was thus centered around him as a figure of authority. Such a model of authority, labelled “spiritual authority” by sociologist James William Coleman, dominated the association in its early days. Lenoir, in his work on convert Buddhist France, confirms this fact when he notes that French practitioners of both Zen and Tibetan traditions insist on the importance of a master to guide them in their practice.338 According to Koné, the authority of the Zen master in the West is derived from a belief in the master’s awakening experience, which is certified, in turn, by his or her own master.339 The master-disciple relationship is then characterized by elements such as signs of deference to the teacher, greater social distance between teacher and student, and rules concerning proper language and behaviour toward the teacher.340 Close to the “Confucian model of the patriarchal extended family,” in this model the master not only holds authority on spiritual matters but also temporal ones such as administrative duties.341 This situation applied to the AZI, at least until Deshimaru’s death in 1982.

337 Coleman, 2001: 129.
338 Lenoir, 1999a: 222.
339 Koné, 2001: 150. It must be noted that such a belief is not based on historical facts, since the idea that monks need to attain satori before they can inherit the Dharma is erroneous. For example Sharf argues: “...the fact is that Chan/Zen ‘dharma inheritance’ entailed the transmission of nothing less than the Buddha-mind, which, according to the logic of Chan/Zen doctrine, is already possessed by all. As such, formal transmission actually involved the ritual investiture of a student in an institutionally certified genealogy” (1995b: 273, fn. 23. See also p. 243).
341 Coleman, 2001: 129.
Lenoir relates the following fact demonstrating the master’s centrality: “...the disappearance of master Deshimaru and the many tensions that followed pushed away many practitioners and had as a consequence the stagnation of its effectiveness, despite the growing popularity of Zen within French society.”342 The death of Deshimaru, the spiritual authority whose status as Zen master was recognized and accepted as authentic by his followers, thus forced notable institutional changes on the AZI.

To speak of the model of authority that developed after Deshimaru’s death, Koné uses Coleman’s model called “spiritual friends” (Pāli kalyana-mitta), which replaced the “spiritual authority” model in place during Deshimaru’s presence in Europe.343 In this model, individuals charged with teaching are treated less formally, and the relation between teacher and student is characterized more by mutual exchange than by transmission of knowledge.344 Such a change of authority was caused partly by the absence of an official dharma heir named by Deshimaru. Nevertheless, he possessed a number of close disciples who would give shape to the association’s structure in the aftermath of their master’s death. In order to understand the AZI and its present functioning down to its Montréal branch, therefore, a few words must be said about the events following Deshimaru’s death and their outcome in terms of authority.

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342 Lenoir, 1999a: 98.
344 Coleman, 2001: 129. Coleman writes: “This term is a rough translation of the Pali word kalyana-mitta, and it refers to the deep bonds of friendship and mutual affection that develop between those who are struggling to follow the spiritual path and those helping them to find their way” (2001: 129).
Deshimaru passed away somewhat abruptly of cancer of the pancreas since he refused, for a while, to acknowledge his sickness. Such a situation partly explains why he did not have the time to give directions to his followers concerning the organization of the association after his demise. Indeed, he had not yet had the chance to give shiho to any of his European disciples, and this caused certain tensions within the AZI. The importance of dharma transmission from a particular master in the eyes of Deshimaru’s close disciples was felt, since, at first, many would refuse to receive it from anybody else. Their refusal caused certain problems, such as preventing them from being authorized to give ordinations. In 1984, however, three disciples were elected by vote to receive transmission from Niwa Zenji, then abbot at Eiheiji. Of these disciples, only Roland Rech is still active in the AZI, but later, many other disciples have also sought transmission from other masters in Japan. These early negotiations surrounding the continuity of the AZI, according to Lenoir, are revealing of the ambiguous relations Deshimaru himself had with Japanese authorities. Indeed, he left his disciples with a

345 Lenoir, 1999b: 281. Lenoir attributes this lack of recognition to the fact that Deshimaru declared many times that cancer was closely related to attachment to the ego, and that a good practice of zazen was a way to avoid it (1999b: 281).
346 Other reasons might reside in the fact that he did not find any disciple fit to receive transmission. For example, de Smedt notes that he was in dismay one night, exclaiming: “Yes, but... I cannot give shiho” (1985 [2005]: 224).
347 It must be noted that Halfmann, in his letter of criticism, points out that a Japanese monk, Horyu Tamaki, received shiho from Deshimaru. He calls this event a “family secret” overshadowed until July 1999.” The godōs at the AZI, however, affirm that Deshimaru gave the monk “a formal shiho which he took back some weeks later, because of bad behavior” (Halfmann, 1999).
348 Lenoir, 1999b: 281.
349 Lenoir, 1999b: 282. These disciples were Roland Rech, Stéphane Thibault, and Étienne Zeisler. While Rech is still at AZI, Zeisler passed away in 1990 and Thibault left the association in 1995 (Pelayo, 1999).
350 Ten out of sixteen teachers on the official site of the AZI are listed as having received official transmission, or shiho, from various Japanese masters. Some have received transmission as late as 2004, and it will be interesting to see the developments when the first generation of individuals who did not practice under Deshimaru will seek transmission. See AZI, “Teachers,” http://www.zen­azi.org/spip.php?rubrique21.
strong criticism of Japanese Sōtō institutions but nevertheless drew his own authority as master in Europe from this sectarian affiliation.\textsuperscript{351} The years following Deshimaru's death, therefore, illustrate well the centrality of the spiritual master and his institutional position in the dissemination of his Zen.

For some time, the AZI went through a transitional period during which followers negotiated its organization.\textsuperscript{352} Nowadays, the AZI is directed by a committee of twenty-four individuals who meet monthly, and which includes many former disciples of Deshimaru.\textsuperscript{353} The choice of a democratic organization following the demise of an Asian master is a common process for Zen groups in the West.\textsuperscript{354} Furthermore, individuals responsible for particular centres across Europe and for La Gendronnière are not called masters, but godōs 後堂, a title defined as “guardian of a dōjō” in AZI literature.\textsuperscript{355} The direction of activities such as sesshins or summer camps at La Gendronnière is shared by different individuals,\textsuperscript{356} illustrating the absence of a single authority at the association’s headquarters. On the other hand, practitioners encountered at the AZM usually identify with a particular master that they follow whenever they have the chance to travel to

\textsuperscript{351} Lenoir, 1999b: 282.
\textsuperscript{352} This period lasted arguably about a decade. Denise, practitioner at AZM, related her experience in 1991 at La Gendronnière: “I found it pretty ‘rock and roll,’ it was a group of hippies, it was undisciplined... It had only been ten years since Deshimaru died, and they had not finished organizing. It is totally different now.” 
\textsuperscript{354} For example, after the demise of Suzuki Shunryū and the crisis caused by the sexual activities of his Dharma heir Richard Baker (b. 1936), many at the San Fransisco Zen Center turned toward a democratic system of authority (Fields, 1981 [1986]: 265). The democratic process at the AZI was also criticized by Halfmann, who wrote: “The committee itself is ‘elected’ in a fairly obscure and undemocratic procedure.” He attributes this weakness to the proxy system, which allows older disciples with enough followers in their respective dōjōs to get elected no matter what (1999).
\textsuperscript{356} For example, the schedule for the summer 2009 was divided in six sessions led by different teachers (AZI, “Calendrier 2009,” http://www.zen-azi.org/spip.php?article149.
Europe. This confirms Koné’s mention of the resurgence of the “spiritual model” in the late 1990s. In the presentation of the AZM below, I will demonstrate that the two models of authority are present to some extent in the organization of the centre.

3. The Association Zen de Montréal

3.1. Beginnings and General Presentation

Having dealt with the topic of Zen in Québec in the introduction to this thesis, I now turn to the presentation of the group under study. The Association Zen de Montréal (or Dōjō Zen de Montréal) was founded in 1979 by French-Canadians who returned to the province of Québec after having practiced under Deshimaru while living in France. The master had then recommended starting a dōjō, and certified it as a branch member of the AZI when he visited Montréal in 1980. Presently, the main teachers of the center are Hei Rin Lise Lambert, ordained as a nun in the Sōtō Zen tradition since 1985, and Go Shin Michel Ménard, ordained as a monk in the Sōtō Zen tradition since 1989. Both of these individuals, along with several other practitioners, were present at the conference and sesshin Deshimaru led during his only visit to Québec. This event, in fact, is cited by many practitioners as being the trigger for their adherence to the AZM. In terms of organization, as presented on the official website of the center, its administrative

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358 AZM, “Historique,” http://www.dojozen.net/fra/azm.php?page=historique. Only one of my interviewees took part in the very beginnings of the dōjō, and he related that at Deshimaru’s sesshin in Québec, the master ordained around twenty-eight individuals as bodhisattvas out of the hundred participants. At the end of the sesshin, Deshimaru also had disagreements with the founder of the Montréal dōjō and relieved him of his responsibilities, putting a group of practitioners in place to manage the dōjō. This anecdote shows that, in this case, Deshimaru’s authority extended to the associations founded in other countries.
359 AZM, “Teaching,” http://www.dojozen.net/eng/azm.php?page=enseignants_eng. They were both ordained by a close disciple of Deshimaru.
committee is composed of volunteers who are all “ordained bodhisattva, monk, or nun.” Such an emphasis on an administrative group composed of experienced individuals is thus in line with the AZI’s concern with democratic decision-making processes. Furthermore, it is an instance where the “spiritual friend” model of authority is at play.

In order to start practicing at the dōjō, interested individuals must first go through an initiation session, which is organized once a month and lasts two and a half hours. They can then frequent the centre, which offers zazen on a regular basis. One zazen period lasts around one and a half hours, and is composed of two sessions of forty minutes of sitting meditation, separated by ten minutes of kinhin, which is slow walking meditation. The proposed cost of one zazen period is $7.00, but practitioners can also pay monthly, which is normally $30.00, or $20.00 for students and unemployed individuals. Every first Sunday of the month, a “Zen day” is organized, which consists of one full day of practice at the dōjō. From 7:00 am to 4:00 pm, a participant can expect to practice zazen, kinhin, kesa and rakusu (a garment worn over the robe around the neck) sewing, do samu (manual work at the centre), and eat silently from a bowl. The centre also organizes around four sesshins a year, which last from two to two and a half days, as well

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360 AZM, “AZM,” http://www.dojozen.net/fra/azm.php. A letter of invitation to the 2009 AZM’s annual general assembly counted twenty-two voting individuals, but invited all members to come. It also provided members with a document summarizing the 2008 meeting, where thirteen voting members were present out of nineteen listed. See Letter in bibliography.

361 The cost of such an introductory session is $30.00 and usually covers unlimited zazen practice for the rest of the month. In the early years of the center, the same introduction used to last longer. A practitioner who started frequenting the dōjō in 1997 indicated that his introduction session was spread over three days. They would start with a theoretical session, then a more technical one where they were taught the posture, and finally a session where they would put the teachings in practice.


as one week-long summer camp. These longer activities are led either by a senior monk from the dojō or by a teacher from the AZI.

Concerning age, out of the thirteen individuals who shared information with me through the medium of either an interview or a questionnaire, nine were aged fifty years old or above. The youngest participant in my research was thirty years old, although I have noted a few younger-looking individuals coming to the dojō during my participant observation. This age information may reflect the fact that older practitioners have a more constant practice due to factors such as retirement, and probably felt more comfortable with participating in my research, having practiced longer. At the same time, it is not rare to hear the comment that newcomers do not stick to the practice very long and that a lot of people come and go. In terms of gender, both sexes are represented roughly equally at the dojō. Among my thirteen participants, five were male and eight female, while the convocation letter for the 2009 Annual General Assembly counted eleven voting individuals of each sex. There is, therefore, no notable predominance of one sex over the other.

In terms of initial adherence in the dojō, most practitioners interviewed had an interest in meditation before they started their practice at the AZM. As mentioned above, some of the older followers met Deshimaru in person at the occasion of his conference and sesshin in Québec. Among this group, a female practitioner in her sixties said that she was practicing yoga before meeting Deshimaru, and that she became a member because his teaching “worked” for her. While traveling in France for a while, another practitioner read a book by Deshimaru and attended his conference once back in the
province. Concerning practitioners who have not met Deshimaru, the reason cited most often for their early interest is a book, and in some cases one of Deshimaru’s books. Many individuals also had an interest in some “spiritual traditions,” such as yoga, tai chi, or other types of mediation. In one case, a practitioner mentioned still practicing tai chi, but usually adherence to the dōjō seems to involve a shift to single practice. Almost all individuals interviewed, furthermore, received an early Catholic education, just as most Québéccers do. However, this education is generally mentioned as a formality, and described as having little or no impact on practitioners’ lives. There is one exception in my interviews, where one female practitioner said that she was deeply religious as a little girl, but that she drastically stopped practicing when she was fourteen years old.

3.2. Centrality of Deshimaru

As soon as one steps inside the dōjō, it is obvious that Deshimaru is still an important figure for the AZM. Indeed, my first encounter with one of the two directors of the dōjō was spent discussing a huge photograph of the master, which is hung on the wall facing the entrance door. In this black and white picture, Deshimaru is sitting in zazen, and the co-director commented on the impressive energy of his posture. Other than being the founding figure of the AZM, Deshimaru also plays other roles in this dōjō. Deshimaru’s presence is felt in the numerous oral teachings taught during practice, where he is cited by the teachers. The books for sale at the dōjō are mostly by him, although

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364 See Appendix C.
there seems to be a growing collection of works by some of his closest disciples.\textsuperscript{365}

Above all, the Zen practiced here is shaped by how the Japanese master taught it, as his concerns for a Zen focused on lay \textit{zazen} practice has been successfully transmitted. By addressing the major themes of meditation, rituals, and institutions mainly through both Deshimaru’s writings and practitioners’ perspectives,\textsuperscript{366} I will demonstrate that the emphasis on \textit{zazen} is the common denominator for everything surrounding the practice.

Before delving into this presentation of the teachings and practices as the AZM, it must be noted that my description of Deshimaru’s and the AZM’s Zen is by no means exhaustive, as it relies heavily on literature that is not necessarily read by all practitioners,\textsuperscript{367} and a total of thirteen individuals who shared information through an interview or questionnaire. It must also be noted that each individual point of view may not be representative of the whole of the group. Finally, since I address nonviolence in the following chapter, I will leave the discussion of morality and ethics aside and return to it later.

3.3. Association Zen de Montréal: Teachings and Practices

A beginner at the \textit{dōjō} receives, as part of his or her initiation session, a small pamphlet summarizing basic terms and practices of the AZM. In this document, one can read: “Above everything, Zen is a POSTURE, the sitting posture of \textit{zazen}, with three

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{365} I will address the importance of Deshimaru’s close disciples in the section on institutions.
  \item \textsuperscript{366} I will also use Lenoir’s sociological study of Buddhism in France to establish parallels when relevant, as well as primary sources such as the group’s pamphlets and website.
  \item \textsuperscript{367} Although he wrote quite a few, Deshimaru does not particularly encourage reading too many books since he puts more emphasis on experience. For example, he teaches: “It is not necessary to read books: rather, have the experience here and now” (Deshimaru, 1981 [1985]: 115).
\end{itemize}
This brief but precise teaching is a good first step in addressing Deshimaru’s Zen as understood by his Montréal followers. I already presented his emphasis on zazen above, and a more substantial explanation is not necessary for the purposes of this chapter. However, I will here present zazen through the eyes of the practitioners who participated in this study.

In terms of practice, all interviewees claimed to practice zazen at least three times a week. The importance of the group for practicing was also a recurring theme in interviews. For example, one of the two individuals in charge of the dōjō affirms that even when only one beginner shows up for a zazen session, it makes all the difference for her. On the other hand, practicing alone is seen as dangerous for some individuals, and one practitioner mentions that it could lead to practicing for oneself only. Most individuals, furthermore, emphasized that it goes beyond simply sitting. Here are a few descriptions of practice that illustrate this trend, retrieved from my interviews when I asked them to define practice: “The dōjō is the door for practice, but once I quit the dōjō, it continues 24h/24h whenever possible. I am not saying that I am thinking about it all the time, but it is at the heart of my life.” “It is when I open my eyes in the morning, until I go to bed at night. You feel it even more when you go to a summer camp or in a monastery.” “Everything is practice.” “For me, practice is my whole life. You know, practice is being in the present moment, being present to whatever you are doing and doing it completely. Sitting can be compared to a musician doing scales, but life is the

\[368\] Introductory pamphlet, 5 (Retrieved at the AZM in May 2008).

\[369\] Only a few will practice at home on a regular basis, usually for reasons of distance from the dōjō.
practice…” "It is like an infusion, you only realize later how much it is part of your life.”

While *zazen* is taken as the basic practice related to Zen, it is also presented by practitioners at the AZM as going beyond the simple act of sitting, and as affecting life in general.

Such a central importance given to sitting and its larger impact on life echoes the modern emphasis on transformative experience advanced by certain proponents of Zen Buddhism. Experience, again, trumps doctrine and words, and is valued above all. A practitioner confirms this view:

> The words of the ancients, of masters, they are the guides, but you need to manipulate them, to observe them, you need to appropriate them, you need to digest them, but you must leave no trace of them. It is not something that you can carry with you all the time. Just like food, if it stays in your stomach, you become sick; you need to evacuate.

Doctrine and language, in other words, are valued as guides on the path or as “skilful means,” but they have no value beyond this role. This view thus presents an image that is similar to the Buddhist image of the raft which must be built to cross over the river but also left behind on reaching the other shore, or the Daoist comparison of words with a fishnet.  

*Zazen*, as a practice, hence becomes the primary element that is used by members of the AZM to explain other elements of their association, such as rituals and institutions. I will also demonstrate in chapter four that *zazen* is also the practice that is cited as central in leading individuals to nonviolence.

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370 The image of the raft is an early one found in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, and is cited in Harvey, 1990: 31. For the Daoist image of the fishnet that is discarded once the fish is caught, see Zhuangzi, p. 302 (cited by Faure in 1993: 196).
Although most practitioners present zazen as the most important practice, other elements of their practice are often cited as different means to keep the state of mind acquired through zazen. For example, a male practitioner in his forties argued that doing sanpai and gasshō helps him to abandon the cravings of his ego, and leads to abnegation. Another interviewee mentioned that, at first, ceremonies made him uncomfortable, but that he changed his mind after hearing a certain Alonzo, Raphaël Triet’s friend, mention the ceremonies as “the spirit that teaches the body,” in contrast to “the body that teaches the spirit” in zazen. In a questionnaire filled out by a thirty-year-old female practitioner, ceremonies and chanting are listed as second in importance to zazen, before the categories of teachings and social life. Ceremonies and ritual, therefore, are generally accepted as part of the practice, supplementary to zazen and of assistance in the maintenance of the right state of mind. Such a perspective can be contrasted with the limited importance of meditation paraphernalia and objects found in the dōjō pointed out by a practitioner interviewed by Lenoir in France. He insists on the secondary importance of ritual, mentioning: “It can bring something supplementary, but it is totally secondary; we can very well do zazen in a forest or in a room, without incense or candles.” There is, therefore, still a wide range of attitudes concerning rituals and ceremonies at the AZI, and practitioners of the AZM generally lean toward a positive outlook on them. However, practitioners embracing rituals explain their importance in relation to zazen, and not the other way around.

374 Coleman presents similar observations in his study of seven different Buddhist groups (including two from the Zen tradition) in the late 1990s. In a survey he conducted, 92 percent of the respondents ranked meditation as most important, above traditional rituals and ceremonies and social relationships with other members (Coleman, 2001: 119-120).
375 In Lenoir, 1999a: 197.
A final point to address before moving to the theme of nonviolence at the AZM is the institutional aspect of the group. Other than its affiliation with the AZI, which I addressed above, other important institutional aspects of the AZM are the Buddhist label and the master-disciple relationship. Just as Deshimaru had presented Zen as beyond religion, practitioners at the AZM do not necessarily attach great importance to calling themselves "Buddhists." The range of answers to the question "Do you consider yourself Buddhist?" is divided rather equally between "yes" and "no," with even an in-between answer; "a little bit." Furthermore, public displays of the centre such as the dōjō's external appearance, pamphlets, and its website rarely mention the word "Buddhism," using "Zen" or "Zazen" instead. There is thus no open association of Deshimaru's Zen to Buddhism at this level of involvement. In his interviews with practitioners at AZI centers, Lenoir notes a similar trend. First, he mentions that this lack of identification as "Buddhist" can be attributed to the fact that most practitioners come to the association for a practice rather than a doctrine. One example that demonstrates such a tendency is found in an interview with a woman who frequents the dōjō when she feels like she needs it. By engaging with the association essentially for the practice of zazen, practitioners do not necessarily need to define themselves as "Buddhists." Such disengagement from Buddhist affiliation can even lead some practitioners to leave centres of the AZI. Hence, one male practitioner interviewed by Lenoir affirmed that Zen centres do not really represent Buddhism. After practicing at an AZI dōjō, he turned toward a Tibetan centre.

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377 Lenoir, 1999a: 71.
where he felt he was “in contact with an authentic tradition.” In France as in Québec, therefore, the Buddhist label is not necessarily adopted, and frequenting the dojō is more related to a practice than a religious affiliation.

Another way of considering affiliation at the AZM is to note the relationship entertained by practitioners with individuals who have received transmission. These individuals are AZI members who were close disciples of Deshimaru. As mentioned above, most serious practitioners spend part of their summer (or any other period of the year, depending on their work schedule) at monasteries in France or Spain. The choice of countries is guided by an affiliation with a particular disciple of Deshimaru. Two recurring names in my interviews were Raphaël Triet and Jean-Pierre Faure. The former is officially responsible for the dojō in Montréal, and mostly teaches at the Morejona, a monastery in Spain. He also shares summer camp teaching with other gođos at La Gendronnière. Many practitioners in Montréal follow him, and try to spend time at least once a year in Europe, even if he comes to Québec for a summer camp. For example, when he taught the summer camp at Kinkora in May 2008, during the same summer many practitioners went to La Morejona to pursue intense practice a few weeks later. As for Jean-Pierre Faure, he teaches at Kanshoji in France, and also teaches during summer camps at La Gendronnière. At least two interviewees mentioned him as their main teacher, and have been to his monastery in the past for extended periods of time as long as three months. Practitioners who mention such affiliation to particular teachers also try to follow their spiritual advice, and express admiration at their level of comprehension.

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378 Lenoir, 1999a: 146.
female practitioner who follows Jean-Pierre Faure, for example, talked about the difficulty Quèbècers have with authority. However, she also affirmed that her practice leads her to have more trust in others, and to leave her ego aside: “Often, when my master tells me things, I do not understand, but now I can trust him. Even if I don’t understand now, I know that at some point I will.” Another practitioner commented on his intimate relation with Jean-Pierre Faure, which he saw as different from his relation to Raphaël, affirming: “Jean-Pierre knows how to shake me, and does not let me marinate in my juice.” The importance of a spiritual teacher in the figure of the European godō is thus a characteristic of the practice at the AZM. Such affiliation, furthermore, seems to confirm Kone’s observation that the “spiritual authority” model is still present at the AZI, here in the specific case of its Québec branch center.

Such relationships with European teachers also demonstrate that the concept of transmission is still an important one at the AZM. Deshimaru’s insistence on experience and its particular mode of transmission is a recurrent theme in his writings. For example, he affirms: “If there is no master, the disciple is like a blind man walking without anything to guide him,” and “It is the master who must certify the authenticity of your understanding; if you certify yourself, there is no true understanding.”379 It thus seems that while keeping this emphasis on experience, which is attained through zazen, AZI centres also promulgate the modern discourse on experience that can only be taught from mind to mind, with the help of a master.380 Most practitioners would agree with this type

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380 Lenoir also notes this trend in France, as he relates that at the AZI, transmission is the transmission of experience (1999a: 329).
of transmission of the teachings, and the following words from a male practitioner are representative of the situation at the AZM:

It is good to practice with a master, with someone who went through the same path before you, someone who also had a master. This is the way of Zen, it is transmitted from person to person, successively, and it is very important that we insist on coming to the dojō, at least once in a while, to be with the group.

Almost twenty years after Deshimaru’s death, therefore, some of his disciples have worked toward reproducing the model of spiritual authority that he left behind. It must also be noted that recently, more communication with Sōtō authorities in Japan has been promoted. For example, a group of teachers, including the two head teachers of the AZM, took part in a trip to Japan to visit a few monasteries during the Spring of 2009. Newsletters from Eiheiji translated into French, furthermore, are available on the posting board of the main room of the centre.

**Conclusion**

This introduction to the AZM and its relation to Deshimaru’s Zen has brought many points to the forefront. I have argued that both the AZI and the AZM are organizations that still follow the main guidelines of Deshimaru’s Zen. The latter’s emphasis on zazen, furthermore, can be seen as a factor of popularity since it attracted, and probably still attracts, individuals by being presented as a technique as opposed to a dogma. Moreover, zazen also gives shape to the institutional aspects of the AZM, as it requires a close relation with a master, but does not necessarily carry the weight of the “Buddhist” label. I will pursue this exploration of the AZM’s teachings and practices in
greater detail in the next chapter, through the theme of nonviolence. Again, *zazen* as primary practice colours the ways in which individuals relate to nonviolence, and its lack of “dogmatic” content contributes to the creation of a variety of interpretations when it comes to discuss the topic.
CHAPTER FOUR: Nonviolence as Idea and Practice at the AZM

Introduction

As addressed in chapter one, there have been many attempts in the twentieth century to articulate a Zen Buddhist ethical system using elements of the tradition such as the bodhisattva precepts, the bodhisattva ideal, or the doctrine of interdependence. It is on these same elements that the discourse of Buddhist nonviolence is often based. I will now explore how these ideas are articulated and put into practice in the lives of individual practitioners at the Association Zen de Montréal. Concerning the theoretical aspect of this inquiry, it must be noted that within the literature of this group, there is no single work that specifically offers ethical guidelines. When asked, however, practitioners have their own interpretations of the ways in which their practice leads them to more nonviolent lives. In this chapter, I present the models of nonviolence proposed by the founder of the Association Zen Internationale, Deshimaru, and complement them with individual accounts gathered through interviews and questionnaires from June 2008. I demonstrate that the absence of specific teachings condemning violence creates a space used by individuals to create their own discourse of nonviolence. In order to do so, I offer the narratives of two main practitioners at the AZM, showing that the group’s consideration of nonviolence can go from getting glimpses of the interconnectedness of everything in the universe to wearing the black kesa as a white flag. The discourses of Zen nonviolence at the AZM, therefore, cannot strictly be accounted for from the group’s
official teachings, but rather involves many discourses related to modern Buddhism and Buddhism in the West.

1. Models of Nonviolence

In order to examine Deshimaru’s discourse on nonviolence, I proceed with concepts generally used in constructing Zen Buddhist ethics. As mentioned above, Deshimaru has no work or teaching comparable to, for example, Robert Aitken’s work on ethics and engaged Buddhist action. In Deshimaru’s writings and commentaries, there is no specific teaching that proposes a Sōtō Zen Buddhist articulation of a nonviolent ethical system. Nevertheless, by exploring his views on the bodhisattva precepts, the bodhisattva ideal, and the doctrine of interdependence, one can find the basis of an ethic of nonviolence, which his followers use and elaborate upon through their individual understanding of his teachings.

Before looking for an articulation of nonviolence in Deshimaru’s writings, it is important to recall that his teachings are driven by a call to return to zazen, or seated meditation, as the key for practice. This comes as no surprise from a Sōtō Zen master who intended to follow the model of Dōgen and who, just like his own master Sawaki Kōdō, criticized the state of the sect in Japan for its laziness and opulence. Indeed, Deshimaru enjoined Sōtō priests in Japan to return to the “root” of their practice, to open

381 Aitken’s The Mind of Clover: Essay in Zen Buddhist Ethics is a work in which he articulates the ethical teachings of Zen Buddhism for his Western students. See Aitken, 1984: 3.
382 Braverman, 2003: 59. Another example of a twentieth century criticism of the state of Zen in Japan came from the Sanbōkyōdan sect, which decried the state of both Sōtō and Rinzai sects and warned against “the dangers of institutionalization, ritualization, and intellectualization” (Sharf, 1995d: 427). This criticism of ritualization goes back at least to Dōgen even though, as demonstrated by Bernard Faure, he paradoxically became “one of those who eventually did the most for the ritualization of Zen” (1991: 289).
their dojōs to the public and teach them zazen.\textsuperscript{383} He even understood his teaching in Europe as a mission to implant “true Zen” in a land where it could truly take root, in contrast to a Japan where the practice of Zen had become stale.\textsuperscript{384} One of his biographers, Marc de Smedt, claims that Deshimaru used to repeat that the seed of Zen could not be found in Japan or Asia anymore, but rather in the West where it was growing in a new soil.\textsuperscript{385} In this sense, zazen became, for Deshimaru, the overarching practice that confers meaning to potentially nonviolent elements in Zen such as the bodhisattva precepts, the bodhisattva ideal, or the doctrine of interdependence.

1.1. Precepts

As presented in chapter one, many proponents of nonviolent Buddhism mention the precept forbidding killing as an important nonviolent teaching. Indeed, the precepts are rules that are undertaken either at the lay or ordained levels, and guide one’s behaviour by forbidding actions such as killing, lying, or stealing.\textsuperscript{386} For Deshimaru and his order, following the Sōtō ordination system, the sixteen bodhisattva precepts as enunciated in Dōgen’s “Jukai” chapter of his Shōbōgenzō are taken at the time of one’s ordination, and are thus present in the life of the practitioner. Deshimaru qualifies the ten

\textsuperscript{383} de Smedt, 1985 [2005]: 148.

\textsuperscript{384} See also discussion in chapter three.

\textsuperscript{385} de Smedt, 1985 [2005]: 147. Also mentioned in Deshimaru in 1969: 143-147, where he explains why Europe is the proper soil to receive his Zen, and in Deshimaru, 1981 [1985]: 51, where he expresses the following: “When the soil is exhausted the seed can no longer grow. But if you change the soil a good seed can develop. Europe is fresh, as far as Zen is concerned, and I hope that the seed of Zen will grow there. Now the Japanese are trying to imitate European Zen.” In this last sentence, he demonstrates his awareness of the impact of Western interpretations of Zen back in Japan.

\textsuperscript{386} Different Buddhist traditions value different lists of precepts. My discussion of the precepts, here, is limited to the list of precepts taken by adherents to the AZI and AZM, which are explained below.
fundamental precepts as the pure and universal essence extracted by the Buddha himself from the Hindu moral system.\textsuperscript{387} Furthermore, he considers the precepts and \textit{zazen} as being in a relationship of mutual interdependence and asserts that practice enhances moral strength and vital energy, which are the two pre-requisites for what he calls "the humanitarian work of the bodhisattva."\textsuperscript{388} The precepts, therefore, represent an important source of ethical behaviour and nonviolence for Deshimaru.

At the same time, however, it seems that the precepts are of only secondary importance in Deshimaru’s writings. For example, one rare instance where he addresses the precepts is in one of the \textit{kusens}\textsuperscript{389} he delivered shortly before his death, and even here he speaks only of the five lay precepts. In this particular teaching, although he qualifies the five precepts as "fundamental," he does not elaborate on them, but instead jumps to the importance of \textit{zazen} and other actions surrounding meditation such as \textit{gasshō} and \textit{sanpai}.\textsuperscript{390} Additionally, in his main introductory work, which has been published in various editions since 1974,\textsuperscript{391} Deshimaru does not explain or even name the sixteen bodhisattva precepts. He addresses the topic in a more specialized work published in 1978, entitled \textit{Zen and Everyday Life: The Practice of Concentration}, in which he explores the ten fundamental \textit{kai}, or precepts.\textsuperscript{392} I will now sketch the outline of his

\textsuperscript{387} Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 131.
\textsuperscript{388} Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 131.
\textsuperscript{389} Oral teachings delivered during \textit{zazen}.
\textsuperscript{390} de Smedt, 1985 [2005]: 230. \textit{Gasshō} is a gesture with joined hands symbolizing the unity between the spirit and existence, and \textit{sanpai} are prostrations in front of the Buddha or the master that occur after chanting the \textit{Heart Sūtra} (Deshimaru, 1974 [1977; 1975; 1981]: 269-273).
\textsuperscript{391} This work is entitled \textit{La Pratique du Zen}, and was first published under the title \textit{La Pratique du Zen: Zazen}.
\textsuperscript{392} In this work, he devotes one chapter to the precepts, entitled "Karma" (135-222).

treatment of the precepts in order to see to what extent they participate in the construction of a discourse of nonviolence.

In the chapter entitled “Karma” in Zen and Everyday Life, Deshimaru introduces what he calls the ten fundamental precepts. Addressing their meaning for the practitioner, he contrasts the “Hinayāna”393 emphasis on morality with the Mahāyāna path that offers a middle way uniting all opposites through zazen.394 The Mahāyāna path, he argues, does not offer the security of a moral code but a “middle way” that:

...dips right away the strong man in the non-everything, the beyond everything, by uniting all opposites, of which he bursts the illusory contours through successive and repetitive contact, in the manner of two soap bubbles that collide until the disappearance of any limitative shell.395

Deshimaru further privileges this method over what he calls the “pragmatic” methods of Hinayāna Buddhism. He thus places the precepts to a secondary rank in importance to zazen.396 Indeed, he even goes to the extent of calling zazen the highest precept that has

393 The use of the pejorative term Hinayāna is his, and thus denotes his consideration of the Mahāyāna tradition as superior to Nikāya Buddhism. Deshimaru writes that the Hinayāna path is gradual and considered inferior, and he advances that this gradual path has, at least, the merit of offering security to the weak (Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 60-62). The devaluation of the Vinayas in comparison to bodhisattva ethics is a complex process that had its roots in sūtras such as the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra. Such texts "paved the way for the establishment of so-called 'bodhisattva-śīlas' as a higher form of Buddhist discipline than the traditional moral code, now denounced as 'śrāvaka-śīlas' or 'precepts of the hearers'" (Kleine, 2006: 77-78). In Japan, Saichō was one of the first to reject the Sūtra lī and establish ordinations based on the Mahāyāna precepts of the Fanwang jing (see Groner, 1984).

394 Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 59. In this sense, Deshimaru follows Dōgen’s rejection of the Chan monastic rules enunciated in the twelfth-century text called the Chanyuan qinggui (“Rules of Purity for the Chan Monastery,” compiled by Changlu Zongze [?-1107?] [Yifa, 2002: xix), which combined the precepts from the Shibunritsu (containing 250 precepts for monks and 348 precepts for nuns) and the Bonmokyo (outlining fifty-eight bodhisattva precepts). See Bodiford, 1993: 164-165.


396 This is obviously not an innovation on Deshimaru’s part, as a literal adherence to the bodhisattva precepts in the Japanese Sōtō tradition has mostly held a secondary importance in relation to the spiritual or ritual meanings on precepts (see Bodiford, 1993: 167-172). Furthermore, Deshimaru’s position follows Dōgen’s emphasis on the supremacy of zazen over precepts and rules (see Heine, 2006: 18-22).
the power to extinguish the defilements\textsuperscript{397} in an absolute way.\textsuperscript{398} Quoting freely from the \textit{Lotus sūtra}, he finds confirmation for his view in the following passage: “Through zazen, we will vanquish all aspects of crimes and faults, and will shine in all ten directions.”\textsuperscript{399}

Before adherence to the precepts, therefore, \textit{zazen} is the guiding practice that leads individuals to understand \textit{karma} and thus behave properly. It remains to be seen how this understanding of \textit{zazen} and its results can lead to an ethic of nonviolence. But first, I will explore Deshimaru’s view of not killing, the precept usually appealed to by individuals arguing for the nonviolent orientation of Buddhism.\textsuperscript{400}

Not killing, writes Deshimaru, is the most fundamental and universal precept, and should be the first to be respected.\textsuperscript{401} Additionally, killing also involves actions other than the physical murder of humans and other beings. For example, Deshimaru advances that not killing can also take the meaning of not making others suffer, not hating, and not being jealous of others.\textsuperscript{402} One of the explanatory premises behind this injunction against harming others is the insight into the undifferentiated nature of one’s body and the rest of the universe. Deshimaru expresses this point in the following way: “...all existences have one body. Understanding the true original nature of the ego signifies penetrating non-separation, non-differentiation between the self and the others. Through this comprehension, any crime, any hatred, any jealousy, any animosity is banished

\textsuperscript{397} Deshimaru uses the term \textit{bonno}, a Japanese translation of the Sanskrit word \textit{kleśa}, or defilement. The \textit{bonnos} are defined by Deshimaru as “all mental and physical functions that disrupt and afflict the spirit” (1978 [1985]: 45-52).

\textsuperscript{398} Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 62.

\textsuperscript{399} Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 137.

\textsuperscript{400} See discussion in chapter one.

\textsuperscript{401} Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 138.

\textsuperscript{402} Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 147.
For him, therefore, the precepts are the natural rules of human behaviour that allow individuals to be in harmony with what he believes to be the true laws of the universe, as opposed to man-made laws imposed externally. In other words, nonviolence, here considered under the precept of not killing, is a spontaneous attribute of the one who has deep insight into the true nature of reality.

1.2. Bodhisattva Ideal

As mentioned in chapter one, works on Buddhist ethics sometimes point to the ideal of the bodhisattva in order to present a Zen Buddhist ethical system. One of the advantages of this model is the possibility of moving beyond having to adhere literally to a list of prohibitions such as the precepts. This possibility to abrogate the behavioural codes is attributed to the bodhisattva’s skilful ability to calculate the greater good that will come out of an action. The bodhisattva ideal is present in Deshimaru’s writings to a certain extent, and practitioners of the AZI still undertake bodhisattva vows. However, it is also worth mentioning that none of my subjects at the AZM mentioned the vows as a model on which to base their behaviour toward others in situations of conflict. In *La pratique du Zen*, Deshimaru’s main work summarizing his teachings, one can find an allusion to the bodhisattva’s goals. In a *Mondō*, or formal question and answer period transcribed in this work, Deshimaru answers a question about the role of love in Zen, arguing: “Love is not made only of embraces and kisses, but also of wooden stick strokes.

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405 I discuss early examples of this skilful calculation in chapter one.
To profoundly rejoice at the success of others, to think unconsciously of their happiness, such is the bodhisattva attitude.\footnote{Deshimaru, 1974 [1975; 1977; 1981]: 69.} In this response, the mixture of hitting the other out of love while keeping an attitude of selfless compassion is typical of the bodhisattva who has such a profound insight into reality that he or she can use skilful means to help others. As with the precepts, however, Deshimaru’s treatment of the bodhisattva’s compassion is also closely related to the insight gained through \textit{zazen}. He writes: “\textit{satori} is realized unconsciously within ourselves by natural transformation of the \textit{bonnōs}, and the spirit of compassion is awakened consequentially, through the sight of those who suffer.”\footnote{Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 72. Again, the term \textit{bonnō} refers to the defilements, or the passions. See definition above, fn. 397.} For him, therefore, the bodhisattva’s compassion is brought through \textit{zazen} as well.

Deshimaru’s understanding of the bodhisattva’s skilful means, in accordance with many Mahāyāna Buddhists before him, allows the killing of an individual in the case where it could save many. He does not expand greatly on this topic, remarking in one place that it is written in a \textit{sūtra}, which he does not identify.\footnote{Deshimaru, 1984: 102. This could be the \textit{U菩提-kaṣālaya sūtra}, in which compassionate killing is enacted to prevent bandits from committing bad deeds (and being born in hell), while at the same time saving the lives of merchants (See Harvey, 2000: 135-136). See also chapter one, section one.} In another instance, he simply states: “In a good spirit, it is sometimes necessary to kill bad people, a dangerous criminal for example.”\footnote{Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 146.} Although Deshimaru’s position is inscribed in a wider tradition...
of skilful means, where the intent is directed at helping the greatest number of beings, such an attitude cannot be taken as a consistently nonviolent approach to every situation, since it allows the killing of certain individuals. I will come back to this point when presenting Deshimaru’s followers’ views on “skilful” violence, and argue that their adherence to this principle is not unanimous.

1.3. Interdependence

In his writings, Deshimaru also appeals to a modern interpretation of the doctrine of interdependence to explain the world of his Zen. On this subject, Deshimaru argues the following:

True universal love comes from the consciousness of our common creation from the cosmic order. The others, without ego like myself, are not fundamentally distinct from me. To make others stronger…. the highest love and the real wisdom consist in leading the other to discover the common root of our life.

In zazen, he teaches, one thus gains an insight into the interdependence of the self and others. That this insight comes through zazen is obvious for Deshimaru, since it is only once one can sit without a goal, or mushotoku, that one comes to the realization that there is no self. Such a view is expressed in his commentary on the Hōkyō Zanmai.
where he writes that everyone, including master and disciple, man and woman, body and organs, are all under the law of interdependence. Without directly asserting that the result of this world view is that zazen can contribute to the spread of peace, Deshimaru nevertheless cites the following sentence from Dōgen’s Bendōwa (1231): “One individual person practicing zazen influences the entire cosmos.” In the context of a commentary emphasizing the interdependence of all phenomena, this choice of citation demonstrates a belief in the potential effects of zazen on a larger scale. The view that zazen can impact individuals and groups in nonviolent ways thus seems to take some of its roots from Deshimaru’s modern take on the doctrine of interdependence.

1.4. Zazen

Ultimately, for Deshimaru, zazen is the way to foster an ethical life and remedy the ills of society. Invited to the 1979 World Buddhist Congress in Japan, he illustrated his belief in the power of zazen in front of a room filled with people representing different Buddhist traditions. Attacking the existence of such a congress and speaking about its uselessness in the endeavour to save all beings, he had three disciples come up on stage

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415 Bielefeldt, 1998: 34.
417 Leighton also uses Dōgen to explain the impact of zazen on others and its relevance for ethics. He cites the Bendōwa as expressing that when one sits in zazen, “displaying the Buddha mudra with one’s whole body and mind,” then “everything in the entire dharma world becomes Buddha mudra, and all space in the universe completely becomes enlightenment” (Leighton, 2006: 62). Other Zen practitioners have criticized this conception of zazen as insufficient as a means of influence in the contemporary period. For example, Nelson Foster, co-founder of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and teacher at the Diamond Sangha in Hawai‘i, asserts: “We delude ourselves if we suppose that our zazen and its gentle good effects can alone have the corrective results that are now necessary for planetary survival” (1985 [1988]: 59-60).
418 This anecdote is related by de Smedt, who was accompanying Deshimaru in Japan with a few other close disciples.
and sit in *zazen*. As related by his biographer de Smedt, his words to the audience were as follows: “here is the only truth to spread, the just action to teach and practice oneself in order to find the clarity of being.”419 This event would not be the only time when he presented *zazen* as the key to eliminate suffering and create a better world.

During an oral teaching, for example, he cites a sūtra that he does not identify: “those who do *zazen* resist general bad karma.”420 The general bad karma mentioned here refers to negative karma accumulated by society, and is addressed by Deshimaru as the cause of a possible atomic war.421 Within this discourse, Deshimaru comments on the same unidentified sūtra with the following words: “But I would like to be precise: those who really do *zazen*, those whose *zazen* spirit is still present in their lives, because one really needs a spirit that is straight, stable, both serene and open, rigorous like the *zazen* posture in order to escape the pernicious pressures of our civilization.”422

Without directly admitting the ethical or nonviolent nature of the impact that meditation can have on individuals’ lives, Deshimaru thus still alludes to its potential in solving critical problems. Following a similar trend of thinking, one of his close disciples, Jacques Brosse,423 interprets his master’s words as an affirmation that “[t]he posture excludes

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419 de Smedt, 1985 [2005]: 118. Note the paradoxical mix of goal-less meditation alongside the spread of meditation for the purpose of saving all beings. This aspect of *zazen* frequently reappears in Deshimaru’s teachings as well as in his followers’ interpretations.
421 This *kusen* was delivered in 1981, and thus probably refers to the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. Concerning the idea of a “collective karma,” Deshimaru taught the idea that through the actions of individuals, civilizations and countries produce their own karma (Deshimaru, 1984: 141).
423 This individual writes that he was ordered by Deshimaru to start teaching three years after his ordination (Brosse, 1992 [1999]: 9). Also a historian, he wrote more than a dozen works on topics such as Buddhism, spirituality, and mythology.
imposture.”424 This idea of a natural link between the zazen posture and just action is an element of Deshimaru’s teachings that frequently comes back in his writings, and is echoed in his followers’ views as well.

When consulted on the topic of an ethical revolution by individuals questioning the future of mankind, Deshimaru apparently presented zazen as the only solution. De Smedt relates this in his biography of the master, explaining his solution as:

... introducing meditation in education to give beings, at an early age, the taste of this practice which will create a feedback between diverse runaways, a control of excitements, a profound reflection down to its roots and will elaborate a true biological thermostat within our psychosomatic entities.425

Such a solution presents an interesting but complex mix of ideas, including the belief in the spontaneous psychological benefits of meditation on individuals and their repercussions on society at large eventually. Since it is not my purpose here to trace the development of this combination of meditation and psychology, it suffices to mention its presence in both modern Japan and the West, where Zen is sometimes explained as a solution to neurotic suffering.426 A second element in the above citation is the idea that meditation is a practice that restores the individual to a natural, spontaneous ethical self.

Such a description of zazen thus fits in what McMahan calls the “Romantic-
Transcendentalist" discourse of modern Buddhist literature. Relevant themes of this discourse are:

... the idea of an inner source from which springs authentic ethical action; the precedence of this source ... over external authority and 'rules'; the transcendence of conventional understanding of right and wrong by a spontaneous and ethically insightful act in perfect accord with circumstances.427

By presenting zazen as the solution to violence in the world, therefore, Deshimaru’s ideas are inscribed in the larger modern Buddhist discourse that interprets the Zen rhetoric of spontaneity within the framework of Western Romantic ideas about nature. These ideas are then coupled with a conception of seated meditation as the method that allows individuals to find their true selves.

Before delving into the ways in which Deshimaru’s teachings are internalized by members of the AZM and put into practice, it is useful to try to explain how zazen “works” according to Deshimaru, or how it guides behaviour when practiced regularly. As mentioned in the above quotation, he believes in zazen’s capacity to act as a “true biological thermostat,” by which he means that it regulates one’s psychosomatic being and thus, presumably, one’s thoughts and actions. He also expressed this idea during an oral teaching, saying: “By the practice of zazen, we can control our negative desires, unconsciously, naturally, and automatically.”428 Meditation, here zazen, as the method to control negative thoughts and tap into one’s inner ethical nature, is an important theme for many Buddhists the West. Again, McMahan writes: “This transformation of internal dispositions, rather than the following of externally imposed rules, is the root of ethical

428 Deshimaru, 1984: 52.
behavior, according to many contemporary Buddhist teachers.⁴²⁹ Such a description of the relation between meditation and ethical behavior definitely applies to Deshimaru’s presentation of zazen. Explaining the exact nature of this control, and what it entails, however, presents many difficulties since Deshimaru was also keen to emphasize the impossibility of speaking about good and evil from a Zen point of view. Nevertheless, it must be noted that Deshimaru is cautious about not falling into the naturalist heresy,⁴³⁰ where everything, including the passions, is part of Buddha nature and thus to be encouraged. Such thinking, for him, is a great mistake and only leads to more passions, or defilements.⁴³¹

Part of Deshimaru’s solution to the problem of Zen morality is also found in his description of hishiryo, a Japanese term that he describes by citing Dōgen. He quotes the latter’s words from the Fukanzazengi: “Please, think from the bottom of non-thinking, do not think from the bottom of thinking; it is Hishiryo, the secret of Zen.”⁴³² This state, which is attained through the practice of zazen, is seen as stimulating instinctive action that will necessarily be right action.⁴³³ Hishiryo is closely related to the doctrine of emptiness for Deshimaru, since it is from this empty state of non-thinking that form, or action, arises. Borrowing ideas from the Heart sūtra, Deshimaru explains that in such a

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⁴³⁰ See chapter one for discussion of the naturalist heresy.
⁴³² Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 15. See also 1984: 78. The Fukanzazengi 善導坐禅儀, or “Universal Promotion of the Principles of Seated Meditation,” is a meditation manual composed by Dōgen around 1230 following his return to Japan (see Bielefeldt, 1988: 15-34, and Heine, 2006: 91).
⁴³³ This is not far from ideas found in the apocryphal Vajrasamādhi-sūtra, where the bodhisattva who does not follow any disciplinary rules yet commits no licentious action (see chapter one).
state, emptiness gives rise to form. He also uses the word *hishiryo* to describe the attitude the adept should maintain during calligraphy, the tea ceremony, and martial arts, among other practices. Within this framework, the world of morality is left behind and characterized as limited to the intellect. Paradoxically, however, morality and just action arise from this non-thinking because it leaves the intellect, qualified as the sixth sense in Buddhism and thus also a source of illusion. Deshimaru argues: "If you think with your personal consciousness, if you must do one thing or another in order to follow the dictates of ethics or morality, then life becomes difficult." According to this view, therefore, if one has the thought of acting properly, one does not do it in the right state of mind, but as soon as one lets go of ideas of the good and helping, one automatically acts that way.

Another important feature of *zazen* that relates to proper action is what Deshimaru calls *mushotoku* practice, or practice without purpose or the idea of profit. He describes this state of mind as having the ability to "transcend dualistic egocentrism" and "regulate the accomplishment of individual actions melted into the rhythm of the cosmic

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434 In this scripture, Avalokiteśvara tells Śāriputra: "... a son of good lineage or a daughter of good lineage who wishes to practice the profound perfection of wisdom should perceive things in this way: form is empty; emptiness is form. Emptiness is not other than form; form is not other than emptiness" (*The Heart Sūtra*, vii).
435 de Smedt, 1985 [2005]: 158-159. Such a connection between Zen and unconscious, intuitive action is closely related to the ways in which D.T. Suzuki has promoted Zen Buddhism to the West in his writings. A marked example of this connection is Suzuki’s treatment of Zen and martial arts, in which he used sixteenth-century Rinzai Zen master Tukuan Sōhō’s writings to develop his theory of no-mind, or *mushin* (see McMahan, 2008: 128-131). Deshimaru often refers to Suzuki’s notion of *mushin*, and affirms that it is the same as *hishiryo*, which, he argues, is simply Dōgen’s preferred rendition of the term (see Deshimaru, 1978 [1985]: 235).
436 Deshimaru, 1984: 74. In this instance, Deshimaru qualifies the desire to do good and avoid bad as "moral passions" since they are related to the attachment to the idea of paradise and the fear of hell. He considers these intellectual calculations for behaviour to be inferior to the comprehension attained through the practice of *zazen*.
By sitting in zazen without thoughts of gain, one develops this ability to act selflessly, and thus acts in accordance with nature. The fact that there are both peaceful and violent forces in nature does not seem to bother Deshimaru too much, as he argues that without following this cosmic order, our lives would be very difficult. What exactly he means by this idea is unclear, but throughout his other writings and teachings it is obvious that zazen leads one to “good” actions. Deshimaru finds confirmation for such an idea in Dōgen’s Shōbōgenzō, which he sees as expressing the idea that one obtains the greatest effects and the most beneficial karma through the practice of zazen. Again, zazen is described as an activity that should not be thought of in terms of gain for oneself or others, but that paradoxically brings benefits. It remains to see how Deshimaru’s followers at the AZM internalize these teachings, and whether they use them to produce a nonviolent discourse.

Through this brief overview of the writings of Deshimaru related to violence and nonviolence, I have demonstrated that he does not exactly construct a specific nonviolent ethic for his followers. While he argues that not killing is an important precept, he also allows its abrogation accordingly with the bodhisattva’s skilful means. He also touches upon the topic of interdependence, which becomes an important theme for his followers

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440 Deshimaru, 1984: 49. Note the parallels between Deshimaru’s claim and the ideas found in the passage from the Treatise on the Transcendence of Cognition cited in chapter one, fn. 100. It goes without saying that Deshimaru’s explanations on how to behave based on zazen is lacking clear guiding rules, and sometimes echo Chan and Zen arguments in support of killing.
441 Deshimaru, 1984: 139. In this sense, Deshimaru follows Dōgen in subsuming all three aspects of Buddhist practice (wisdom, meditation, ethics) to zazen. For example, Dōgen asked his disciple Ejō (1198-1280): “When seated in meditation (zazen), what precepts are not being observed? What virtues are lacking?” (Bodiford, 1993: 169. Also cited in Heine, 2006b: 22). It is important to note, however, that Dōgen composed many works dealing with monastic rules (see Kim, 1975: 234).
at the AZM. Deshimaru’s primary concern, however, remains to present zazen as the practice that leads practitioners to attain a state of mind beyond the intellectual distinctions of moral systems. Such an aspect of his teachings prevents the articulation of moral guidelines. The different themes in his writings, furthermore, are internalized in various ways by his followers. In the section below, I will show that two main narratives are produced out of the AZM teachings. While some practitioners argue that Buddhism is inherently nonviolent and leads individuals to adopt a nonviolent stance, others advance that violence is sometimes necessary. While both narratives take their roots from the seeds sown by Deshimaru, they do not necessarily agree on the topic of nonviolence. I will now turn to individuals practicing at the AZM in an attempt to trace the different understandings of nonviolence produced by their practice of Deshimaru’s Zen.

2. Individualized Modes

In Deshimaru’s writings and oral teachings, the practice of zazen and reaching a certain state of mind dominate over injunctions to behave in a specific manner. Although faithful to Deshimaru’s emphasis on zazen as the root of individual and social peace, it seems that his followers have interpreted his teachings from their insights and practice, and have come up with their own experience of the lessons Zen Buddhism has taught them. In the following section, I explore how, although they barely mention specific ethical teachings in Buddhism, individuals deal with the topic of Zen nonviolence. The fact that this nonviolence is interpreted individually also creates a multiplicity of meanings and practices. For example, while one individual elaborates on diminishing
anger through sitting, another views the interdependence taught in Buddhism to mean that hurting others is hurting the self. While both cite Deshimaru's and his close disciples' teachings to support their claims, both also go beyond them and transform them through other prominent Western discourses to explain the inherent nonviolence they see in their Zen practice.\textsuperscript{442}

Before presenting the various responses offered by practitioners at the AZM during interviews, it is pertinent to mention some details about the methods I used to organize data.\textsuperscript{443} In the following section, I do not group responses according to the categories of nonviolence I have used to this point, namely the bodhisattva precepts, the bodhisattva ideal, and the doctrine of interdependence. Although participants mentioned compassion and interdependence, their responses are much more difficult to classify under these categories. Instead, nonviolent themes that stood out in my research included the value of accepting other views, being compassionate, seeing the interdependence of the self and others, and the importance of being at peace with oneself in order to be at peace with others. Each of these themes contains overlapping elements, which are combined according to the practitioner's experiences with Buddhism, and are in turn filtered through his or her own cultural background.

In my presentation of nonviolence as interpreted by Deshimaru's followers in Montréal, therefore, I chose to follow mainly the narratives of only two practitioners, into which I integrated elements from other practitioners' accounts. On one hand, I present

\textsuperscript{442} Examples of these discourses are provided by McMahan, who calls them the "native traditions" of the West: theosophy, analytic psychology, Christianity, Judaism, Enlightenment rationalism, Romanticism, and Post-Modernism (2008: 19).

\textsuperscript{443} See introduction for the method used to gather data, and chapter three for general ethnographic information about the group.
Valerie, a female practitioner in her sixties who turned to Zen Buddhism partly for its nonviolence and who still maintains its validity in finding peaceful solutions to conflicts. I then proceed to Richard, a man in his fifties whose adherence to Zen Buddhism was not initially related to nonviolence, but who admits that his practice leads to nonviolence in the sense that it has helped him to diminish his anger and has taught him to deal with others in a more peaceful way. He nevertheless still adheres to the view that sometimes, violent means can be used to help other people. Covering these two individuals’ treatment of Zen and nonviolence, complemented by information gathered through my other interviews, I create two principal narratives of Zen and nonviolence that give a good idea of the range of opinions on the topic at the AZM. While individuals in both narratives cite Deshimaru’s and his close disciples’ teachings to support their claims, they also go beyond them and use personal experience to show the nonviolence in Zen. Far from forming a comprehensive picture of what Zen nonviolence can be, my exploration of the topic will thus show that Zen Buddhist inspired nonviolence in the group is an individual and contextual phenomenon that feeds on both ideal teachings and lived experience.

2.1. Valerie

Valerie, a follower in her sixties who works as a nonviolence trainer,\textsuperscript{444} has practiced at the Association Zen de Montréal for 13 years. Before Deshimaru’s Zen, she

\textsuperscript{444} She works for a company that offers nonviolence workshops in schools and work environments.
also practiced Rinzai and Tibetan Buddhism.\footnote{She was first introduced by a friend to Rinzai Zen in London during the seventies. In her own words, she “took other kinds of spiritual paths; Arubindo, and Tibetan Buddhism...”, and then practiced at the Rinzai-affiliated Centre Zen de la Main in Montréal before she changed for the AZM “when that was kind of over.”} As a middle-class Argentinian woman who was raised Catholic and immigrated to Canada fifteen years ago, her understanding is mixed with other Buddhist and “spiritual” traditions, which shape her view of the nonviolent teachings in Zen. When relating her first experiences with Buddhism, Valerie admits that she was attracted to the religion because it did not have the history of violence that the Catholic Church had. In her initial turn toward Buddhism she thus held a preconceived notion of a tradition of peace that never justified the use of violence in wars, a result of the modern representation of Buddhism to the West as a religion of individual and world peace.\footnote{See chapter one for a description of the different proponents of a nonviolent Buddhism.} It is thus highly probable that this conception of a nonviolent Buddhism also influenced Valerie’s perception of Deshimaru’s teachings. Furthermore, by seeing Zen in this way, she in turn contributes to making it a source of nonviolent teachings.\footnote{This process of representation is addressed by McMahan, who argues that fantasies about Buddhism should not be neglected in the study of Buddhism in the modern West and Asia since these misconceptions can have an impact on how Buddhism develops (2008: 21). This is especially true in Valerie’s case since she spreads this “peaceful Buddhism” through her nonviolence training workshops.} While this process of representation and transformation can be observed in many followers, with Valerie it is a large part of her life since she works as a nonviolence trainer in schools and businesses. Using a mix of Buddhist ideas along with other nonviolent traditions, she develops her nonviolence programs by picking and choosing from the tradition and creating a nonviolent Buddhism. In order to do so, just like other practitioners, she appeals to different concepts that are taught by Deshimaru but also interprets them in new ways.
The first thing Valerie mentioned when I address the question of Zen Buddhism and nonviolence is the doctrine of interdependence. She affirmed that Zen practice at the AZM leads to getting glimpses that the other is you, and that there is no separation between self and others. Answering my question about the potential of Zen to provide nonviolent alternatives to conflicts, she argued that since people do not want to injure their own selves, this insight logically leads to nonviolence toward others.\textsuperscript{448} Such a world view and its logic were also mentioned by other practitioners. For example, Mary, a woman in her late forties who has practiced at the AZM for twelve years, thought that to hurt others is to hurt oneself. She explained this idea by saying that for a practicing individual, there is gradually less separation between oneself and others. Indeed, a week before my interview with Mary, Raphaël Triet, leading the summer camp in May, discussed the importance of seeing the self in others. By that, however, he meant that one can see the same potential for violence in oneself and other people, but at different levels, which are further explained by people’s karma.\textsuperscript{449} Without directly admitting that injuring another is equal to injuring oneself, he thus still put forth a way to better comprehend other people’s potential for violence. This comprehension, for some practitioners, is enough to lead them to deal more peacefully with other people’s violent acts or attitudes.

\textsuperscript{448} Such an affirmation, again, is a product of a modern interpretation of the doctrine of interdependence. There are, however, antecedents for the idea in early Mahāyāna writings. For example, McMahan cites the Korean monk Gihwa (1376-1433): “Humaneness implies the interpenetration of heaven and earth and the myriad things into a single body, wherein there is no gap whatsoever. If you deeply embody this principle, then there cannot be a justification for inflicting harm on even the most insignificant of creatures” (2008: 178). McMahan adds, however, that “such an explicit link between the ontology of interdependence (or interpenetration) and ethics is … rare” (2008: 178).

\textsuperscript{449} I received his answer when I asked him the following during a personal conversation: “If other people are you, how can you enter in relationships with other people without acting out of self-love?” (May 2008).
Another practitioner who presented interdependence as the basis for the nonviolence in Zen is Lucie, a woman in her sixties. She was introduced to Zen Buddhism at the conference Deshimaru gave when he was invited to Montréal in 1980 by the members of the recently-founded dōjō.\footnote{As I mentioned earlier, the dōjō was founded in 1979 by practitioners affiliated with Deshimaru’s teachings.} After this event, she started practicing and has never stopped since then. Her explanation of conflict contained an interesting mix of the notion of the three poisons (greed, hatred, and delusion) and interdependence. She affirmed: “Greed is a terrible poison, and when you don’t have what you want you become angry, which is the other poison, you see? The third poison is ignorance—ignoring that we are related to the cosmos in its entirety, that we are interdependent.” For Lucie, while greed is the starting point of conflict, ignorance seems to be the poison that keeps us from seeing our interrelatedness to others and thus resorting to violence. In this scheme of thought, countering ignorance is thus an important step in nonviolent action, since it can act as a calming agent on our greed and anger toward others. By seeing the interdependence of the self and others, it becomes harder to keep wanting what others have and to be angry at them. She also added that people who do not practice Zen can also realize this truth, but thought that Zen is the royal way, or the highway to it.\footnote{She used the French terms “la voie royale” and “l’autoroute,” respectively.} She argued: “it helps us feel that we are not that important, after all.”

In a conversation about zazen, Denise, an acupuncturist in her late fifties, also appealed to a version of interdependence when she claimed that her practice can have a peaceful impact on a larger scale. Her explanation of meditation and the way it relates us
to others presented the doctrine of interdependence coupled with her training in the healing sciences. After talking about the situation of Buddhist monks in Myanmar, she reflected:

I think that even if one is not in a country in conflict, it has an impact. The fact of being peaceful is like a rock that you throw in the water: it makes circles. You know, we are, and the word was again used today (Zen day), something universal. It is like breathing: we breathe, but for people who do osteopathy, the breathing of the subject who is being treated enters in a level where “it” breathes. It is something that is in our clock, in our bio-rhythm, it is in the human being. So it is something of that order that is vast, that traverses us.

Her interpretation of the ways in which zazen affects the individual and then society is thus linked to a discourse, common in the West, emphasizing a connection between Buddhism, nature, and the healing sciences. From this view, zazen becomes the practice that allows a calm state of mind, which is the first step in the creation of peace on a larger scale. That this process can happen, according to Lucie, is due to the interconnectedness, or universality, of human beings.

Besides emphasizing the interdependence of the self and other people around, another aspect that Valerie mentioned when it comes to nonviolence in her practice was the gradual loss of attachment to one’s opinion. First mentioning that she would not offer the ideal view that Zen practitioners are always less conflict-ridden, she still argued that practicing individuals will become less attached to their opinions and desires. Since, for her, conflict is created when “you are not doing what I want you to do,” she concluded that people less attached to their desires will necessarily have lives with less conflict. At

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452 See chapter three, and section one of the present chapter.
play in this understanding is the view that through practice, one becomes more aware of
the coming and going of emotions and opinions and is then able to be less attached to
them. While Valerie did not mention technical terms like the bonnōs or mushotoku,453 her
explanation of this detachment is similar to Deshimaru's explanation of the
transformation of egoistic thoughts and actions through practice.454 However, and this is
where Valerie’s perspective departs from Deshimaru’s, this practice becomes a way of
solving conflicts with other people nonviolently since it will create a space to listen to the
other instead of sticking to one’s opinions, preventing negotiation.

Sophie, a practitioner in her forties who has been practicing for at least ten years
and who sometimes translates works of the AZI from French to English, concurred with
Valerie when she affirmed that her practice provides her with the emotional distance
necessary to deal nonviolently with other individuals. Answering my question about the
nonviolent impact of Zen on her life, she said:

> I try to see that my reality is not Reality. I mean, I can think of
> something, and someone else can see it differently. That is not
> easy. ... I try to let compassion arise, you know, when people
> annoy you, when you feel like judging them, I tell myself that
everybody has the nature of the Buddha.

Sophie’s practice thus leads her to be more open-minded when it comes to looking at
other individuals’ points of views. Seeing alternative ways of thinking without judging is
explained by her within the framework of compassion and the attempt to avoid judging
others. Such compassion leads to nonviolence since better acceptance also means, first,

453 See discussion of these terms in the context of AZI literature in the present chapter, above.
454 For example, Deshimaru writes that mushotoku is a “state of consciousness that transcends the egocentric
dualism” and that harmonizes “the accomplishment of individual actions melted in the rhythm of cosmic
movement” (1978 [1985]: 72).
less chance of fostering more conflicts and, second, not trying to crush others in situations of conflict.\textsuperscript{455}

Benjamin, a practitioner who has been going to the dojo for eleven years, also presented his practice as leading to better relationships with other people since it helps him to let go of the desire to be right all the time. After I presented my topic to him, he told me:

...you abandon your egoism, you stop looking at yourself, you stop locking yourself up in your head, in your thoughts, in your small problems, and you are more apt to see the person in front of you. To be listening, that’s it. When you have to solve a conflict, it is only that the person in conflict with another must stop thinking about herself and start listening. It does not necessarily mean that we will always be in agreement, but you can still understand the point of view of the other. And this is the way of the Buddha: it is to encompass all points of views, to avoid staying inside one’s own egoistic point of view. It is that simple!

Benjamin’s experience with Zen, therefore, leads him to a better appreciation of the other’s point of view, but not necessarily to the detriment of his own opinion. When it comes to dealing with interpersonal conflicts, Benjamin’s explanation is close to Sophie’s, since both affirm that practice enhances their ability to listen to others even in times of disagreement. Instead of trying to hurt the other person mentally or physically in order to prevail over their opinion, they seek to let others have their views while engaging in dialogue.

\textsuperscript{455} Although rejecting the views of others is not mentioned specifically in relation to violence in Deshimaru’s writings, it is interesting to note that “killing the views” of others is seen as a seed of violent action by some Buddhist individuals. For example, Robert Aitken, in the chapter entitled “Not Killing” of his Mind of Clover, argues that “If I am anxious to protect myself, then I will kill your views” (Aitken, 1984: 23). From this perspective, Sophie’s presentation of her attitude to other people’s views could relate to nonviolence.
Abandoning the desire to be right all the time, or having to "win" an argument, can manifest in other competitive activities as well. Marc, a practitioner in his fifties, affirmed the following: "my practice also changed me in the sense that I am a much less competitive person, in sports for example. This may be less good, in some ways, since you start losing tennis matches, but this is only if you mind losing...." Although Marc's attitude is not necessarily directly related to nonviolence, one can see here another way in which practice leads to letting go of the desires of the ego. The last part of his sentence, expressing that it only matters if one minds losing, is also interesting since it advances a certain indifference to the results of the game. In other words, if you argue or compete with a mind that is mushotoku, then you have less chance of winning. However, since the desire to win is understood here as a negative manifestation of the ego, Marc's ideal practitioner is not disturbed by losing.

The narrative represented by Valerie's stance thus promotes an ideal vision of Zen practice as leading to nonviolence. Here, Zen was chosen by the practitioner for its peaceful orientation and its doctrine of interdependence articulates a world view in which hurting another being is absurd since it also means hurting oneself. Furthermore, practice leads one to be more open-minded to other people's opinions, which may mean that one will be less inclined to hurt the opponent in a situation of conflict. Valerie's narrative thus presents Zen as a source of nonviolent conflict resolution, and does not justify violent means to reach one's ends. Themes that are at play in this discourse are the

456 This is an interesting point since it contradicts the popular view of Zen that promises enhanced performance by letting go of the conscious desire to win. Benjamin, in fact, agreed that sometimes it seems that Zen "takes," but he also affirmed that if one's occupation is to be a tennis player and to win matches, one can still be performing. He explained that maybe it will not be done with an aggressive spirit, or the desire to crush the other. He finished: "But if your work is to win matches, you will win matches."
modern Romantic interpretation of interdependence and values of tolerance toward
opinions differing from one’s views. Zazen also occupies a place of importance since it is
considered by these practitioners to be the best method leading to insights on the
undifferentiated nature of reality and the strivings of the ego to be right all the time. In
the following section, I explore an alternative discourse that also presents Zen as mainly
leading to nonviolence, with some exceptions.

2.2. Richard

Richard is an artist in his fifties who was introduced to Deshimaru’s Zen when he
was nineteen years old. After his brother-in-law, who met Deshimaru in person, showed
him the posture of zazen, Richard started his own dōjō at his cottage in the woods. After
two years, he stopped practicing, in his own words, “because of alcohol, women, or, in
short, life as an artist.” It thus appears that his practice initially corresponded to a rather
antinomian type of Zen popularized in the sixties, where elements such as rules and
authority were not considered very important.457 His beginnings with Deshimaru’s Zen
were of a different order than what Valerie described, and were not motivated by a
perception of Zen as less violent than other religious traditions. Richard’s reasons for
starting the practice were his admiration for his brother-in-law’s impressive energy and
his own desire to become stronger. Although he was not affiliated with the AZM during
those years, he has been for the past ten years, when, as a result of a serious disease, he

457 See chapter one, section two.
decided to start his practice anew. He even moved to Montréal to live closer to the dōjō, which illustrates his strong commitment.

For Richard, the posture practiced while sitting in zazen is the first element that impacts his life. In order to explain this process, he repeated Deshimaru’s words that zazen affects a person “automatically, unconsciously, and naturally.”458 From this first assumption, the primary importance given to the posture, over, for instance, theoretical teachings related to the precepts or how to be a bodhisattva is evident.459 In this sense, and Richard’s answer here is representative of many practitioners’ views on the topic, the presentation of nonviolence in Zen is characterized by Deshimaru’s emphasis on zazen. Richard’s view was confirmed by Marc, who holds a view of zazen and its automatic benefits that is similar to Deshimaru’s. Marc claimed that ultimately, the zazen posture is a great gift because people must practice with the spirit of mushotoku, which means, for him, practicing for nothing. In our conversation, he exclaimed how it could seem odd to practice for no purpose, and added that Deshimaru, when reading the notebooks of his master, had thought the same: “To practice rigorously, but for no reason!” (Marc’s paraphrase). In life, Marc explained, we always do something for a reason, so if we start doing it for nothing, we develop an attitude of donation. And the result is that one can now give one’s time for nothing. Finally, Marc mused that the fact that we do this,

458 An expression repeated by Deshimaru in both his written works and oral teachings. See 1984: 196, where he says in a kusen: “I always say ‘automatically, naturally, unconsciously.’” De Smedt also mentions it in his preface to La Pratique du Zen. See Deshimaru, 1974 [1977; 1975; 1981]: 12. See also section one of the present chapter.
459 Such a view of Deshimaru’s Zen is in accordance with the teacher’s presentation of Zen as a technique and not a dogma (see chapter three).
sometimes without knowing, may be what Buddha nature is, since everyone helps his or her neighbour to a certain extent.

Following these two explanations of the ways in which zazen affects individuals, an important question arises. If individuals should abandon any sense of purpose in their practice, then how can they conceive of the “good” ethical action and then act upon it? Or, in other words, how does one get out of a passive stance when faced with ethical questions? As a step toward answering these questions, Richard’s views can be useful. For him, the impact zazen has on someone is not one of passive acceptance of others just as they are, good or bad. To illustrate this claim, he shared his experience of having to deal with members of his lodging cooperative who stole money from other members. He decided to get elected on the board and make sure the guilty individuals would not go unpunished. Discussing the fact that punishment does not necessarily mean violence, he added:

As for me, I came to the realization that the only way, and it is not easy to find, is that one has to do what cannot not be done. And it is only this way that we can understand it. Because automatically, just action is behind this way of thinking. And when you are sure of this just action, the spirit is at peace. And this is the only way, according to me, to do what cannot not be done.

This notion of a “just action,” therefore, is related to an individually experienced sense of social justice and a concern with action in this world. Richard thus adheres to Deshimaru’s idea that zazen allows one to tap into an intuitive sense of ethical action, a recurring theme of the “Romantic-Transcendentalist” discourse in modern Buddhist
Such an intuitive understanding of the “good” action helps explain why he employed a double negation, “what cannot not be done,” to qualify the type of action he aspires to. Beyond this notion of an intuitive “just” action, Richard also affirmed that automatically, practice leads to adherence to the bodhisattva precepts. He explained:

... the first shocks of satori behind, you realize that you need to follow the precepts and the eightfold path. But you also realize that you are already doing it without noticing. It is that way for most people.... You are seeing the flowers of zazen, finally.... I would say that it is like an infusion, or that zazen works through absorption. But I still have efforts to make as a monk!

Such words demonstrate that although many of the results of zazen are automatic, Richard is aware of the precepts to follow as an ordained individual. Nevertheless, he explained the precepts as the “flowers” of zazen, growing naturally, nurtured by its practice. Such a view is reminiscent of the bodhisattva who does not need to adhere to the precepts, but who respects them naturally.

Another interesting aspect of Richard’s experience with Zen is his gradual work with his own anger. In the following reflection, he demonstrated how for him, practice came to take a nonviolent meaning:

When I was ordained bodhisattva, the little black square, for me, was a white flag that I was offering to myself. To make peace is to make peace with oneself. This is what I started to see, that if I was in the process of making peace with myself, I could make peace with others. And it is this way, really, that I completely wove in zen for the rest of my life.

Therefore, an important symbol in Zen Buddhism, the black square of the kesa, was experienced as a white flag, a symbol of surrender and thus peace for Richard. While this

\[460\] See discussion in section one of the present chapter.
interpretation is not one that comes directly from Deshimaru, his teachings contain the idea that *zazen* leads to decreasing the passions and the sense of an ego. In this sense, Richard’s stance expresses the surrender of passions and anger to make space for individual peace. Richard also indicated that this peace fosters peace with others. Through his own practice, he thus uses Deshimaru’s teachings to create a nonviolent ideal.

While having a conversation on social engagement, Richard also argued that his practice automatically opens him up to compassion. On this topic, he paraphrased the teachings of a close disciple of Deshimaru affirming that “*zazen* without compassion, or awakening for oneself only, is absolutely ridiculous. It is noble, but not more than that.” The development of compassion through *zazen*, therefore, goes hand in hand with abandoning the idea that one’s practice is for oneself. Richard also argued that the posture, even if practiced by the greatest egoist, over the years, leads to a feeling of great union, a union that is unnameable, incomprehensible. He said it surely leads to the other, to the healing of the suffering of the other. He mentioned the importance of seeing that this person is in trouble. Richard’s white flag, therefore, can become a method of dealing with others in less violent ways, since, first, he can see and let go of his own anger, and second, realize and see beyond the anger in the people with whom he deals. The way in which he internalized the Zen teachings of Deshimaru, therefore, is inseparable from his own past experiences with anger, and a certain amount of reading from other meditative traditions. Indeed, Richard admitted to having read a lot of Krishnamurti, Carl Jung, and

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461 This quotation refers to Raphaël Triet, who is still active in Spain and usually comes annually to the province of Québec to lead summer camps, *sesshins*, and other activities.
Richard’s approach to anger coincides with a modern use of meditation as a way of dealing with one’s negative emotions. He argued that the very act of observing his anger enables him to disarm it by seeing its origins and then letting it pass by. Stressing the importance of attention, he claimed that it leads him to react in a different, less violent way with others. Mary also offered an interesting image to speak of the way in which she tries to deal with anger. She compared anger to a spark in the forest, and added that instead of feeding the spark and causing a fire, one should become aware of it but keep walking without suppressing it. Such considerations of the way in which meditation can help with anger are a reflection of the modern psychoanalytical interpretation of meditation. 462 On this aspect of meditation, Denise offered an interesting presentation of her experience with Zen and anger. She said:

You know, while sitting and watching yourself, if you are in a situation of conflict, you can be sure that it will go through your screen. And then you are in a kind of non-willing, non-attachment, non-retaining, so the blinkers are wider and sometimes, it leads to resolutions. I experienced it. I used to get carried away easily, you know, I used to be a very angry person, and sometimes it comes back full speed, even now. When the mustard comes to my nose, it is crazy! 463 Fortunately, this practice, throughout the years, made me go swiftly through things, and I don’t get caught too much anymore. And I am less angry than before. These are very precise situations that I am starting to better identify. I think and I let go. I have a little distance. But sometimes, I do not care about the distance, it needs to come out!

462 For example, McMahan argues: “One of the most influential views of meditation to emerge from the psychoanalytic tradition is that, like psychoanalysis itself, it opens up the unconscious to consciousness and in doing so frees the individual from destructive habits and repressed contents of mind” (2008: 192).
463 French expression meaning that one becomes angry.
Denise’s perception of her anger and how she deals with it is closely related to the practice of sitting, where she can better observe her patterns and anger. Nevertheless, she still admitted to getting angry sometimes, and her practice is thus a continual process of observing her emotions. In these cases, however, she mentioned that she goes through her phases of anger quicker than before. Her experience with practice thus echoes Deshimaru’s reputation of getting angry at disciples and yet being calm immediately after.464

Concerning anger, Richard was also faithful to his master when he admitted that sometimes, anger can be useful. While we had this conversation, I reminded Richard that he told me once that Zen sometimes helped to let anger come out. He then replied by relating an experience he had in Spain with Raphaël Dōkō Triet during his ordination. The teacher was naming the precepts and the eightfold path, and said that one needs to be careful with anger, but that sometimes it is also important to be angry.465 And this is because one has to show the path to others. On that topic, Richard shared his idea that sometimes, one has to give a good kick in the rear end to someone who is lost. At play in this treatment of anger is thus the skilful means of the bodhisattva, who does not reject any means when it leads to the greater good, but who remains calm and compassionate in his mind. Here, Richard demonstrated that he does not hold a strict adherence to nonviolence, since he allows its use in certain situations.

464 See chapter three. Mary also expressed this particular view of anger when she said that anger and emotions can be expressed in practice, but they should not stick to the mind of the individual. There is no attachment to these emotions, whether they are negative or positive.

465 Deshimaru treats his own anger in similar ways, yet mentioning the freedom of his consciousness from anger even when he scolds his disciples. See 1984: 224-225.
A more nonviolent method of dealing with anger was related to me by a female practitioner during a conversation we had at the May 2008 summer camp. The mother of two children, she said that she once consulted with an AZI teacher about how to manage her anger when dealing with individuals. In response to her inquiry, he advised that she should give a quarter to everyone who annoys her. The few individuals taking part in this conversation bantered on how hard she should throw that quarter to the annoying person, maybe reflecting the casual atmosphere of the conversation, which took place while sipping a beer in front of the fireplace. Nevertheless, this is an original method of dealing with conflict by giving money, a gesture contrary to what one usually does when someone is annoying. In this response, one can perceive echoes of stories in which Sawaki got Deshimaru drunk, or Raphaël Triet asked for money from a beggar to take a subway.\footnote{For the first anecdote, see chapter three. The second anecdote is related in a transcribed question and answer period to Triet during the summer camp of 2006. Triet, as a young man, asked for money from a beggar to take the subway and get to Deshimaru's birthday party. He uses this anecdote to show that one must abandon one's certainties when trying to help others. He relates Deshimaru's words: "One must beg to the beggar and give to the rich man" (Kusen, 2006: 11). This unconventional way of helping, Triet argues, enacts a change of spirit in people that is necessary to understand how to help others.} One can also see glimpses of skilful means in such behaviour, even though it is not emphasized as such by practitioners. This combination of stories and theoretical ideas thus illustrates the multiplicity of ways in which the discourse of nonviolence is articulated at the AZM.

Richard's narrative is representative of a view of practice that is more intuitive than the logical insights explained by Valerie. Such an explanation of the intuitive aspects of practice does not exclude the idea that sometimes, violence can be used as a skilful means to help others. Compassion, in this sense, is valued above the means to put
it in practice. In this narrative, furthermore, the idea that *zazen* helps to deal with one’s own anger is strong. This treatment of anger, however, is accompanied by an affirmation that anger can be an important emotion that one should acknowledge but not nurture. Any of its manifestations are ideally described as a means to help individuals, just as Deshimaru’s fits of anger were understood as necessary for his followers’ progression in their practice. Leaving aside the two narratives represented by Valerie and Richard, I now turn to a discourse emphasizing the importance of the *saṅgha* as leading to a nonviolent orientation.

### 2.3. The *Saṅgha*

In treating interpersonal conflicts and their nonviolent solutions, it is necessary to consider group behaviour. After all, it is within his or her group of co-practitioners that the individual first interacts after the practice of *zazen*. Such group encounters require practitioners to put the insights gained during *zazen* in practice, and are even considered a practice in themselves. According to Sophie, for example, practicing with other members of the *saṅgha* holds a place of importance since it creates an automatic process of self-perfection. She affirmed: “It is an occasion to turn the mirror toward myself and to say, well, if a certain situation of conflict arises, how can I be part of the problem, how can I be part of the solution? We say that *saṅghas* are like little rocks in a bag that polish each other through friction.”467 This image of the rocks polishing each other is one expressing the importance of practicing with others, entering into conflict with them and gradually

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467 This image is also mentioned by Hori in his presentation of Zen in America (1998: 59).
learning to deal with people in nonviolent ways. Indeed, Sophie affirmed that even in Zen, there are many occasions for conflicts.

Sometimes, for example, we get nervous, we don’t have a lot of time, we want to do things in a certain way, and others disagree with us. …Confidence, to have trust in others, these are aspects of the practice that are very strong. They force you to leave your pride aside, to leave your ego aside.

This process is one that can happen while doing samu, periods of work during Zen days or sesshins where the practitioners have to cook, wash the dishes, clean the living quarters, or other manual tasks. It is during these periods that practitioners interact with others and possibly come into conflict over ways of doing work.

At the dōjō or in other settings such as summer camps or monasteries, therefore, practitioners have the opportunity to conflict with one another and apply the insights gained through their practice. I experienced such an opportunity while participating in a sesshin in May 2008, when I entered into conflict with a practitioner over how to wash the dishes. While someone had taught it to me in a certain way, this man insisted on doing it another way. I have to say that due to his insistence, I let him do it his way.

Although this is not an illustration of nonviolence since he definitely “won” by just not listening to me, it is still an interesting anecdote illustrating the ways in which conflicts occur in the microcosm of the community of practitioners. Indeed, beyond the sangha, on the topic of the potential of Zen to solve conflicts nonviolently on a large scale, practitioners usually emphasize the importance of individual practice before its broader application. Sophie, for example, does not think that practice can be used to solve international conflicts, but she mentioned the situations in Myanmar and Tibet and
expressed her admiration for monks who continue to practice and uphold a compassionate attitude toward their adversaries in times of conflict. Rather than offering ways in which practice can be applied on a larger scale, therefore, she bases her view on individual examples. Nevertheless, on the topic of war, she believes that if one cannot “solve” a war, it is at least possible, through practice, not to add to the violence.

The idea that it is necessary to deal with one’s own conflicts before one can deal in nonviolent ways with others is one that was also mentioned by Benjamin: “If you want to solve a conflict, you must solve conflicts you have with yourself first. For this reason, at the level of society, it is less easy to solve social problems, or wars.... So what you can do in this situation is to awaken yourself.” At stake in this view is also the possible application of conflict resolution to a larger social scale, but only once individuals have dealt with their own inner conflicts. Concerning this issue, Benjamin’s view is representative of other individuals at the dōjō, who usually suggest going through steps toward individual peace and only then apply this peace to relations with others. An illustration of this process happened in a discussion with Benjamin on internationally active monks such as Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai-Lama. He sees them as individuals who, through their practice, have been able to attract individuals and create change. He affirmed: “If there had not been this strong practice, which attracted individuals to do the same, and led them to develop a spirit of gratitude, they would not help in their mission.” For him, it is in this way, through practice, that one can have an impact at the social level. One can only influence the world from one’s practice, by awakening oneself, by abandoning one’s egoism, and by being ready to listen to others.
Finally, a rather interesting anecdote concerning nonviolence on a larger scale was related to me anonymously through a female practitioner’s answer to a questionnaire. She shared the following story:

One day, a practitioner coming out of zazen was walking by his master’s side. He said: “I am happy, I just did a good zazen. I have the impression that I am helping others, even those who do not practice.” The master smiled and said: “Yes, it is true. When you remain sitting, in silence facing the wall for an hour and a half, at least you do not piss off anyone, and thus yes, you help others.”

Such an illustration of nonviolence offers an alternative perspective on the topic of conflicts with others, as it takes zazen to a different level, and in a rather humorous fashion. Here, in the master’s response, sitting is not a practice giving the follower any deeper insight on reality and relations with others, but physically keeps him from entering into conflicts with people. The story thus adds to the variety of discourses of nonviolence, and offers an interesting perspective on the idea that by sitting in zazen, every precept and virtue is respected.\textsuperscript{468}

\textbf{Conclusion}

Before concluding this chapter, it is important to note that the centrality of zazen for the followers at the AZM presents an important difficulty for anyone who attempts to write on the topic. Although many of my interviewees mentioned their appreciation of the fact that I sat zazen with them as part of my research, in their eyes, anything I say about zazen needs to come from experience, and language itself is not sufficient to

\textsuperscript{468} See reference to this idea from Dōgen and Deshimaru’s paraphrase in the present chapter, section one.
explain all the dimensions of this experience. For example, when I started speaking of
the bodhisattva ideal and helping others, Lucie repeated that it is more of an unconscious
thing for her. Then, she advised me to come back to the following idea when I would be
done with my research: “This should not be one more theory in our already packed
brain,” she said. She also added that it was good to do this research, but that after, I
should let it settle. This view of theory, in contrast to experience, as not sufficient to
confer teachings thus seems to be an obstacle to any attempt to explain nonviolence as
viewed and practiced at the AZM. At the same time, however, it helps explain the variety
of ways in which Zen is related to nonviolence. This lack of direct explanation, in other
words, opens a space where the individual is free to experience zazen in creative ways.
The following sentence by Benjamin expressed this view: “Zen is extreme in the sense
that there is nothing to lean on, no support except your backbone that supports you.
There is no incantation, no magic, no saving God, that’s it. Therefore, for solving
conflicts, there is no recipe, no list of steps.” 469 Benjamin thus reasserted the view that
Zen is beyond intellectual comprehension and that one needs to practice zazen to realize it.
Perhaps as a result of this lack of specific guidelines, practitioners are further inclined to
experience traditional elements of Zen in their own ways. Doing so, they bring modern
Western values to their interpretation. The teachings of Deshimaru are thus filtered
through individual experience, and practitioners are not prevented from bringing elements
of other traditions, spiritual or not, in their practice.

469 Such a demythologized approach to Zen is one aspect of the modern interpretation of Buddhism. McManan defines demythologization as “the modernization of cosmology along with a ‘symbolic interpretation of traditional myths’” (2008: 7). As discussed in chapter three, in the case of Zen Buddhism, the presentation of Zen to the West by individuals such as D.T. Suzuki promoted Zen not as a religion but as a pure, unmediated experience of reality that is both rational and empirical (see Sharf, 1995b: 246-248).
The two broad narratives provided in this chapter have been useful frameworks for exploring the variety of responses to the topic of Zen and nonviolence at the AZM. Keeping in mind that there are many ways to organize the data gathered through my research, these themes still reflect two ends of the spectrum of Zen and nonviolence in this group. Valerie's narrative, largely influenced by her experience as a nonviolent trainer and her preconceptions of Zen as a nonviolent tradition, offers a description oriented toward the ideal end of the application of nonviolence in one's life. On the other hand, Richard's narrative represents people who believe in spontaneous ethical action as a result of practice but who also see violence as a necessary means in some cases. Exploring both narratives and some additional views on group practice, I have tried to convey that an ethic of nonviolence is not constructed solely from Deshimaru's teachings, or from his followers' practice. However, when combined together, these teachings and their various individual interpretations form a plurality of discourses that intersect with each other. The approach of a practitioner to nonviolence is thus proper to the AZM and, although it could share many elements with other Zen Buddhist traditions in the modern West and Asia, is definitely contextual. The theoretical views found in Deshimaru's written and oral teachings, the different stories about teachers that illustrate (or contradict) these same teachings, or the cultural background of each individual are all factors that participate in the discourse of nonviolence at the AZM. By giving attention to only one of these aspects mover the others, it is impossible to arrive at an adequate presentation of the place nonviolence occupies in this group's practice.
CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have explored the topic of Zen Buddhism and nonviolence through the case study of a Sōtō Zen Buddhist group situated in Montréal. The different issues treated in the four chapters illustrate well the wide range of themes involved in studying the topic at hand. Indeed, I had to go back to different Buddhist scriptural justifications of violence in order to trace the language Buddhists sects used to justify Japan's aggressive endeavours in the twentieth century. I also had to give attention to the relationship entertained between sects and the state in China and Japan to better explain why Buddhist individuals did not abide by the precept forbidding killing and offer resistance to the violence of armed conflicts. Such a historical context, in turn, helped to assess Deshimaru's sometimes antinomian language, but also his concern to redeem his participation (and, through the same token, his master Sawaki's) in the Fifteen-Year War to his French audience in the seventies.

When it comes to the idea of Zen nonviolence at one of his branch groups, the AZM, Deshimaru's writings present an ambiguous relation to violence. Although he does mention the bodhisattva precepts and presents a world view in which everything is interdependent, he also advances the view that one could kill in certain circumstances and is himself depicted as a figure with a hot temper who would not hesitate to break the precepts. His views on right behaviour, in fact, are best summarized in his presentation of the effects of zazen on individuals. Such ideas are assimilated by his followers in Montréal, where the absence of specific teachings is transformed through each
individual's background. Hence, when consulted on the impact of their practice in terms of nonviolence, practitioners offer a variety of answers that illustrate not only the influence of Deshimaru's writings, but also the impact of multiple discourses found in modern Buddhist literature and Buddhism in the West. In my conclusion I will thus come back to these discourses in an attempt to analyze the results of my research and situate them within the context of studies on Buddhism in the West.

When speaking of modern Buddhism, I would first like to specify that this category of discourses is largely a product of the encounter of the West with Buddhist traditions, but that it is not limited to Buddhism in the West. For example, the Japanese discourse promoting the inherently rational and empirical nature of Zen Buddhism may be modern but it remains a discourse of Meiji New Buddhism. Furthermore, while it can be argued that it was constructed out of a dialogue with Western philosophical ideas, it must be remembered that it was also a product of a Buddhist movement responding to intense social upheavals in the Meiji period. Therefore, although many aspects of modern Buddhism derive from its encounter with discourses of the modern West, we must also give attention to traditional aspects of the religion. To take nonviolence as an example, the precept of non-killing illustrates the importance of *ahimsā* early in the Buddhist tradition, but the claim that any Buddhist has a duty to denounce and protest war activities in his or her country is debatable. The purpose of my research is thus not to assess whether nonviolence is a "traditional" aspect of Buddhism, but rather to trace the various discourses at play in the treatment of nonviolence at the AZM.

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470 I address a similar debate concerning whether engaged Buddhism is traditional or not in my introduction.
In assessing the ways in which members of the AZM explain the relation between their practice and nonviolence, several themes arise. To start with the founder, Deshimaru, I have demonstrated that his emphasis on zazen leads him to present the practice as the solution to most social problems, including interpersonal conflicts, armed conflicts and even personal problems. At stake in his writings is thus an elusive treatment of ethics, which does not really offer guidelines or directions in terms of behaviour. By giving closer attention to his teachings, however, I have proposed that his practice of zazen includes following the precepts, cultivating the virtues of the bodhisattva, and accessing the insight that every phenomenon is interrelated. Such a view of ethics is partly a product of his master’s insistence on zazen and criticism of the Japanese sectarian institution. On the other hand, responding to his followers and other inquiries on the pragmatic aspect of his teachings, Deshimaru turned his Zen into a practice that enables individuals to respond to the cries of the world. For example, he was definitely optimistic on the eventual widespread appeal of zazen as a technique. In an interview published in 1984, he expressed the following: “Sooner or later, the principles, let’s say at least utilitarian, of Zen will be integrated into Western mentality.”471 By reducing Zen to a technique, separated from its religious content, Deshimaru thus made his Zen not only more appealing to a public suspicious of religious dogma, but he also added a pragmatic aspect to it. Such a characteristic confirms Queen’s argument that one of the

471 Deshimaru, 1984b: 95.
characteristics of Buddhism in the West is pragmatism. At the same time, Deshimaru’s Zen follows patterns similar to the Japanese so-called “New Religions,” which promise this-worldly benefits through the adoption of a certain practice.

When it comes to the practitioners’ views of nonviolence in their practice, the AZM discourses on nonviolence open up to a variety of themes related to modernity and Buddhism in the West. The narrative represented by Richard contained the idea that zazen has an automatic beneficial impact on one’s anger and, through the same token, on one’s relation with other people. Prominent in this discourse is the presentation of Zen as a kind of psychotherapy that allows a natural balancing of one’s emotions. Richard and other practitioners, furthermore, believed in the larger impact of this inner peace on one’s moral decisions and relations with other people. Aside from the psychological aspect, therefore, a Romantic view of human beings as able to attain their “true selves” in harmony with nature is at play. Indeed, such a transformative aspect of meditative experience in the life of the individual is a strong concern at the AZM, as gathered from the centre’s website: “In our disturbed world, practicing zazen means coming back to the human being’s true dimension and rediscovering the fundamental balance of our existence.”

This optimistic view is sometimes related to Zen antinomian rhetoric, where laws and precepts are left behind by one who has access to a particular insight, here that of the bodhisattva. Nevertheless, Richard stressed the necessity to make efforts

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472 Queen, 1999: xix. Queen discusses American Buddhism in this passage, but it definitely applies to Buddhism in the West (thus including Europe) in this case. The other two characteristics he mentions are democratization and engagement.

473 Some of the characteristics of Deshimaru’s Zen are also reminiscent of Sharf’s description of Sanbōkyōdan Zen (1995d). For example, Deshimaru taught Zen to Christian orders and offered a demythologized Buddhist cosmology.

and follow his bodhisattva precepts, which demonstrates that he does not believe that practitioners should be above any type of rules. Rather, rules and behaviour should coincide naturally.

In the narrative represented by Valerie’s views, the prominent theme was the doctrine of interdependence, an ontological stance rendering the act of hurting other people equal to hurting oneself. This particular interpretation of interdependence, articulated in some of Deshimaru’s writings, also found resonance in modern discourses on the compatibility of Buddhism and scientific thoughts, as well as the Transcendentalist stance on the universality of all phenomena. Rather than a use of interdependence as the assertion of a non-dual, empty outlook on reality, where any action is equally valid, practitioners promoted it as a justification of the importance of non-harming. At stake in such explanations of nonviolence is also the popular idea of Buddhism in general as a nonviolent tradition. As presented in chapters one and two, however, the ways in which various ideas and doctrines were interpreted by practitioners in the past depended on historical circumstances as well. This phenomenon is a pattern discernible in the Zen tradition, in which individuals attempting to justify both violence and nonviolence have presented their views as a return to “true Zen.” Such reality opens up the question of how differently Deshimaru’s teachings could be interpreted in the context of a country at war.

There are many other questions opened up by the research for this thesis. There still remains the question of the nature of Deshimaru’s participation during the Fifteen-Year war, since I had no access to other sources to confirm or correct the many stories related in his autobiography. In addition to this lack of secondary literature, Deshimaru
himself does not address the topic of the war in his other works or oral teachings. Even in his book on Zen and martial arts, the topic of Zen violence and its historical roots is addressed very briefly. In terms of the contribution of my research to the field of Buddhist studies, since this thesis addressed a particular group, I cannot provide a greater picture of Zen and nonviolence in the West. In order to go further into this issue, I could further compare this group with other Buddhist groups in the West, whether explicitly active upon their stance on nonviolence (e.g. Aitken’s group) or not (e.g. Suzuki Shunryū’s group), and assess the effects of different factors such as the personality of the founder, the political situation during the founding of the group, or the cultural background of its practitioners on a group’s view of nonviolence. Leaving the topic of nonviolence aside, from the ethnographic perspective, it would be interesting to take a closer look at the AZM and its relation to France to see if there are any marked distinctions with other Zen Buddhist groups in North America.

I have also demonstrated through this thesis that although practitioners at the AZM are affirming the nonviolent impact of their practice on their lives, this impact manifests itself mostly on an individual basis and does not necessarily lead to an active nonviolent stance. Although many practitioners believe in the subtle repercussions of their own peace on others and perhaps even on society at large, most profiles do not correspond to a close association between Zen and social action. It is relevant to mention, however, that most participants in this research worked in domains related to helping

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475 Deshimaru 1977 [1983]. In this work, Deshimaru explains the origins of martial arts by referring to the necessity monks had to defend themselves against brigands and soldiers. He writes that monks developed those hand combat techniques because they were forbidden by their precepts to use arms. Deshimaru also adheres to the legend that martial arts techniques were developed by Bodhidharma (1977 [1983]: 91-92). See Shahar 2008 for an academic account of the development of martial arts in Chan Buddhism.
others. Other than Valerie’s work as a nonviolence trainer, which is directly related to my topic, other employments included psychologist, nurse, and acupuncturist. Obviously, such information cannot be used to conclude that Zen practice fosters a desire to actively help others, but it could be interesting to research further on the topic. Furthermore, there are different factors at play in practitioners’ interpretation of Zen, such as the teachings of the founder and his disciples, the influence from other popular Buddhist traditions or “spiritual paths,” and modern discourses such as psychology, romanticism, and social engagement. However, it remains difficult to separate these trends and identify the processes through which individuals belonging to a particular group form their opinions based on the group’s teachings. In some cases, the discourse of certain practitioners concerning Zen and violence may even be unrelated to Deshimaru’s discourse, or, as a matter of fact, Buddhism itself. Such a situation leads to the following question: Is the nonviolence described by practitioners Buddhist? In the West, since many Buddhists tend to “pick and choose” certain practices and ideas from a tradition while leaving others aside,476 it is thus not surprising to see elements belonging to different discourses, Buddhist or not, joined together under the “Buddhism” label.

Finally, I hope that I have been able to convey the idea that while nonviolence is an ideal upheld in the Buddhist tradition, when it comes to explain how individuals put it into practice, many other factors come into play. Even in a rather small group such as the AZM, there is no commonly held notion of why Zen is related to nonviolence and how it has an impact on individuals’ behaviour. Nevertheless, the variety of discourses at play

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in practitioners’ responses shows that it is only by approaching the topic in a particular context, here the AZM, that it becomes possible to identify the different trends involved in Buddhist nonviolence in a twenty-first century group. It also illustrates well the fact that Buddhism, in this period as in the past, is a tradition that must be studied in particular cultural and geographic contexts if we want to make any sense of it as scholars.
Appendix A: Questionnaire and Interview Guide

Questionnaire

1) Background
What is your: Age? Sex?
What is your occupation?
Are you married? Do you have children? How many?
Do you consider yourself involved in your community (volunteering, political participation, helping individuals in need, etc...)?
If yes, what are the main actions you do in your community?

2) Practice
For how long have you practiced Zen meditation?
In what year did you start practicing at the dojō?
How often do you practice during a normal week?
Have you attended one the following before?-Summer camp -Sesshin
-Zen Day -Other (specify)
How would you list these aspects of the dojō in order of importance for you (1=most important, 4=least important) -Meditation -Social life
-Teachings -Other practice(s) (specify)

3) Religious Affiliation
Do you practice/believe in a religion? If yes, which one?
What religion were you raised in, if any?
Do you consider yourself a Buddhist?
Is affiliation with a certain type of Buddhism important for you?
Do you practice other types of meditation?

4) Zen Buddhism and Society
Do you think any aspect of Zen has answers to the following contemporary issues?
-Environmental crisis -Psychological troubles
-War/Armed conflict -Other (specify)
Do you think Zen Buddhism can help resolve conflicts in peaceful ways?
If yes, which one(s): -Political -Personal (family, friends, etc)
-Work conflicts -Other (specify)
If you answered yes to the question above, what aspect(s) of Zen makes it relevant for conflict resolution?
- Meditation
- Particular Leader(s) (Name)
- Philosophical ideas
- Other (specify)

5) Open Questions
In what way(s) has your practice influenced your life (individual, family, work, community, political views/actions)?
Is there any additional comment/idea you would like to share about the dojō or Zen Buddhism in general?

Interview Guide

1) Information about you: Your age? Your occupation? Are you married? Do you have children and how old are they?

2) Please tell me about your first encounter with the Association Zen de Montréal. Did you already practice some form of Buddhism before? If yes, what type and where? If no, what was your previous, or other, religious affiliation?

3) How did you get interested in Buddhism, or Zen Buddhism?

4) What is the frequency of your practice? Do you practice outside the centre?

5) How do you define practice?

6) Do you read Buddhist literature? Which books?

7) In what way(s), if any, has Zen Buddhism affected your life (personal, social, work, or other)?

8) Do you think Zen Buddhism has the potential to provide non-violent alternatives to conflicts between individuals in environments such as work, family, or social circles? If yes, do you think that this potential extends to larger issues, such as the peaceful resolution of political conflicts (wars, social problems, other)?

9) Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience as practitioner at the centre?
Appendix B: Deshimaru’s Lineage

Appendix C: Portrait of Deshimaru

Le Roshi T. Deshimaru en posture de zazen, au temple qu'il a fondé à Paris. (photo Raphael Triet)

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