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*The Eastward Transmission of Buddhism across the Pacific:*

*The Development of the Nikkei Buddhist Missions in Hawaii and Mainland United States*

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The Japanese Buddhist denominations launched the foreign propagation (*kaikyo*, as they coined) in the late nineteenth century. Japanese priests consequently crossed the Pacific to Hawaii and mainland United States at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century to conduct the *kaikyo* in the New World. This presentation will critically examine two problems in the previous studies of prewar Japanese American history.

First, historians of Japanese American studies mostly deal with either the Honpa

-ha), which result in neglecting the activities of other denominations. This paper

will discuss the characteristics of each denomination and eventually uncover the diversity in Japanese Buddhist missions in these areas.

Second, the narrative of preceding studies, although revolving around Buddhism, tends to illustrate it from priests' points of views as they rely on archival sources from the missions. Therefore, scholars pay little attention to the role of committed immigrant workers who even appealed the mother temple to send priests for them. Therefore, this paper will examine some cases of how this religion interacted with lifestyles of the lay immigrants.

Due to different ethnic population and historical background, the Nikkei communities and the Buddhist missions in Hawaii and mainland US alike experienced varying problems. With these regional differences in mind, this paper concludes by considering postwar resettlement of the Japanese Americans and recent trend in the denominations.

For the panel discussion, this Hawaii/North American cases may offer some criteria for comparative analysis with the South American cases whose religious tradition is predominantly Catholic. With the Buddhist propagation began relatively later than the United States, the discussion may be able to juxtapose and demonstrate overall history of the Nikkei religions in the Americas.