

Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Columbian Exposition. Judith Snodgrass. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003. 360 pages. \$59.95 cloth, ISBN 0-8078-2785-1, \$21.50 paper, ISBN 0-8078-5458-1.

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The Columbian World's Exposition and the World's Parliament of Religions held in 1893 in Chicago for the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America, constitute the background for Judith Snodgrass' *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Columbian Exposition*.

As the author writes in Chapter Two, "Manifest Destiny: Christianity and American Imperialism," the World's Parliament of Religions was one of the Auxiliary Congresses, organized in conjunction with the Columbian Exposition, which were "an exhibition of the spiritual, intellectual, and social progress of mankind" (p. 45). These congresses were proposed by Charles C. Bonney, lawyer and civic leader of Chicago, and a follower of Swedenborg, with the aim at providing a series of conferences on different themes in the fields of "'government, jurisprudence, finance, science, literature, education and religion,' discussed by . . . practitioners, 'statesmen, jurists, financiers, scientists, literati, teachers, theologians'" (p. 48).

In spite of the fact that it was designated as a "World's Parliament of Religions," Snodgrass highlights, agreeing with the by now well-established interpretation of the event, that the Parliament was predominantly a Christian affair, namely an American Protestant Christian one, which served to promote the advancement of the Occidental-Christian civilization. The presence of non-Christian religions there, was functional so as to provide it with its international status, and subsequently, to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity to which the other religions had to revert. Moreover, among its organizers there was the concern for issues on a domestic level, namely, as Snodgrass notes: "a bid to assimilate the rapidly increasing number of immigrants from diverse religious backgrounds into the Protestant ideal" (p. 46).

From the very beginning, the Christo-centric message propounded by the organizers was extremely clear, as it can be deduced, for instance, from the words of greetings and the description of the opening ceremony of the Parliament in the proceedings, which are also cited by Snodgrass. Let me mention here that the singing of Psalm 100 which opened the Assembly, as the author cites (p. 64), was followed by the recitation of the Pater Noster through which the "supreme moment of the 19th century was reached. Asia, Africa, Europe, America, and the isles of the sea, together called him Father. This harmonious use of the Lord's Prayer by Jews, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Brahmans, and all divisions of Christians, seemed a rainbow of promise pointing to the time when the will of God will 'be done on earth

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as it is done in heaven'” (Houghton Walter R., ed., *Neely's History of the Parliament of Religions and Religious Congresses at the World's Columbian Exposition*. Chicago, 1893, pp. 35–36).

Judith Snodgrass, senior lecturer in Japanese history at the University of Western Sydney in Australia, in the book under review, provides a substantial account of how the participation of the Japanese Buddhist delegation in the World's Parliament of Religions was both functional to the affirmation of Japanese Buddhism on a domestic level in the Meiji period, as well as, on an international one, as “an attempt to modify Western perceptions” (pp. 14–15). Further, through the presentation of Buddhism on the one hand, and the display in the Hōōden, the Japanese Pavilion at the Columbian Exposition, on the other, Japan was aiming to gain international prestige and recognition, in both the spiritual and intellectual spheres, and also in order to obtain the revision of the “unequal” treaty agreements with other Western nations, which “had been the overriding concern of the Meiji government since it came to power in 1868, affecting both domestic and foreign policy” (p. 17). This issue is well explained in Chapters One and Eight entitled respectively “Japan faces the West,” and “Buddhism and Treaty Revision: the Chicago Project” which are taken into account in the following.

The Japanese exhibition in Chicago, together with the participation of the Buddhist delegates in the World's Parliament of Religions, were useful for Japan to assure it of a strategic position among the ‘civilized’ nations, a position which could have allowed for negotiations of the revision of the treaty agreements finalized in 1894. As Snodgrass states, the participation of Japan in the Columbian World's Exposition was not only an opportunity for increasing commerce and developing new markets, but “the Japanese government also saw participation in the Chicago fair as a chance to influence Western public opinion in its favor” (p. 18). The revision of the treaty agreements “shaped the presentation of Japanese Buddhism” to the Parliament (p. 173). Noteworthy, in this regard, is the paper presented by one of the Japanese delegates, Hirai Kinzō, under the title “The Real Position of Japan toward Christianity” (in Chapter Eight), in which he stresses the injustice of the treaties and attacks “Christian imperialism in Japan,” (p. 181) claiming that Japanese religious thought was often misunderstood and misrepresented and the Japanese “condemned as heathen” (*Neely's History*, 1893, p. 158). Thus, Snodgrass notes, “Western misunderstanding of Japanese religion was used as an excuse for not granting Japan's request for abolition of extraterritoriality and favorable revision of the existing treaties” (pp. 182–183).

Interestingly for the reviewer is the position Japan had with its culture, art and architecture in the Exposition analysed in Chapter One of this book, under the title “Japan faces the West.” Japan was presented in the Hōōden or Phoenix Pavilion situated on the Wooded Isle “at the center of the main exposition site,” (p. 34) and not in the Midway Plaisance, “a long corridor to the side of the main concourse”

established by the Exposition's Department of Ethnology, where "along with the sideshows and amusements, . . . most of the Asian and Third World countries were represented" (p. 20). Originally, the Wooded Isle had been conceived so as to be free of buildings, but after the insistence of the Japanese government, the organizers decided to offer the island to be used for the Japanese Pavilion (p. 34). Japan had thus a privileged position, away from the other Asian countries and Third World nations, which bestowed upon it the status of an independent state, and the recognition of a 'civilized' and modern country, as accurately highlighted by the author. The Midway Plaisance was a symbol of evolutionary ideas of race and social Darwinism, and at the top of its hierarchical "anthropological evolution" was the Western, white American type with the White City (white was also the light of Christianity, symbol of purity and perfection over all the other religions). The Midway, and the fair in general, was a display of the superiority of the West and the "Darwinian justification of Western dominance" (p. 21). Japan was facing this problem and therefore, as mentioned above, chose the Hōōden as its visual representation.

Snodgrass provides then the reader with an account of the history of the Japanese Pavilion and its description, as it was presented in the pamphlet *The Hōōden* by Okakura Kakuzō. The Pavilion, itself, was conceived by Kuru Masamichi, the Japanese government's architect, with its interior designed and realized by the Tokyo Fine Art Academy supervised by the same Okakura, which was inspired by the Hōōdō of the Byōdōin temple (eleventh century) at Uji, near Kyoto, and represented three periods of Japanese culture: the Fujiwara in the north wing; the Ashikaga in the south wing; and the Tokugawa in the central hall. As Snodgrass claims: "the intention was always to show the high state of Japanese culture at the time of the birth of America" (p. 32). Arts and religion were thus a means to declare Japan's status as a 'civilized' nation, to be treated equally with the other Western countries.

Japan participated in the World's Parliament of Religions with a delegation of Buddhist priests composed of representatives of different denominations: Shaku Sōen (Rinzai Zen), Yatsubuchi Banryū (Jōdo Shinshū), Toki Hōryū (Shingonshū), Ashitsu Jitsunen (Tendaishū), and the lay Buddhists Hirai Kinzō and Noguchi Zenshirō as interpreters. Snodgrass argues that they were "all active in Meiji Buddhist reform and went to Chicago as part of their ongoing campaign for the revitalization of Buddhism" (p. 115). The Buddhism they presented there was

"Eastern Buddhism," a repackaging for a Western audience of *shin bukk'yō*, 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. *Shin bukk'yō* was the New Buddhism of Japanese modernity, formed in an intellectual climate in which the West was recognized as both model and measure of modernity; shaped and promoted in reference to the West." (p. 115)

An account of the process in the formation of *shin bukkyō* is provided in Chapter Five “Buddhism and Modernity in Meiji Japan,” which lays the foundations for the subsequent chapters.

In Chapter Six entitled “Buddhist Revival and Japanese Nationalism,” the figure of Inoue Enryō (1858–1919) and his work *Bukkyō katsuron joron* (1887) are examined in detail as examples of an adaptation of Western constructs and a philosophical theory in the presentation and demonstration of the validity of Japanese Buddhism. This analysis has been included in a wider discourse on the recognition of Japan’s spiritual and intellectual achievements on an international level, and a defence of the nation against both Western imperialism and the adoption of Christianity, which “depended on developing a strong national spirit” (p. 147) through the revival and preservation of Buddhism, “one of the strengths of Japan” (p. 149). Snodgrass’ position is that the participation alone of the Japanese Buddhist delegation in the “international, Western, and Christian event” (p. 153) of the World’s Parliament of Religions would have validated the project of revitalising Buddhism in modern Japan.

She goes further, claiming that by presenting Japanese Buddhism under the category of “Eastern Buddhism,” the Japanese Buddhist delegates were opening “a space within the existing Western discourse” (p. 199), and that the representation in Chicago was “reinterpreted in accord with the rules of Western scholarship” (p. 200). “Eastern Buddhism” was addressed to a Western audience with the precise aim at gaining esteem, and was “ideally suited to meet the challenges of the Christian Parliament of Religions” (p. 200). It is in Chapter Nine, “Defining Eastern Buddhism,” that Snodgrass provides the reader with a substantial account of this issue, which is followed by and linked to two other chapters (ten and eleven) dedicated to Paul Carus (1852–1919) and his writings, especially *The Gospel of Buddha*, which were a consequence of the representation of Buddhism at the World’s Parliament of Religion and, on the other hand, “in promoting Buddhism as a religion of science and in denying its association with nihilism did reinforce the Buddhist project at the Parliament” (p. 243).

Chapter Eleven, “Deploying Western Authority II: Carus in Translation,” focuses on the relations among Paul Carus, Shaku Sōen and D.T. Suzuki, the translation of *The Gospel of Buddha* into Japanese, and its function in the process of a Meiji Buddhist revival.

To point out the role of some other influential Western figures in the promotion of Buddhism, Snodgrass focuses her analysis also on Henry Steel Olcott, founder and president of the Theosophical Society, in Chapter Seven, “Deploying Western Authority I: Henry Steel Olcott in Japan,” and offers a reflection upon his 1889 tour of Japan, “at the invitation of a committee of young Buddhists led by Hirai Kinzō” (p. 155), which she considers a strategic move so as to publicize and approve of Buddhist reform.

The last of the twelve chapters into which this book is divided is entitled “From

Eastern Buddhism to Zen: a Postscript,” and deals mainly with the well-known role D. T. Suzuki played in the propagation of Zen Buddhism to the West, and with the transition, in the discourse on the East-West encounter, from the construction of “Eastern Buddhism” propounded by the Japanese delegation at the World’s Parliament of Religions and Zen Buddhism as ‘constructed’ by him. Snodgrass in this chapter also mentions other authors responsible for such a construction of the Orient, and of the image of Japan in particular, as presented to the West, such as Okakura Kakuzō’s English writings (see also Chapter One), and Nukariya Kaiten’s *Religion of the Samurai* (1913).

In conclusion, a few remarks are needed to be given on the organizational structure of the book under review. *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West* is written in an agreeable style which has to be appreciated, though in some parts it suffers a little from repetitiveness and a lack of homogeneity so breaking the flow of the discourse, both of which could have perhaps been avoided. One point of criticism which this reviewer wishes to raise, concerns the spelling of Max Müller’s surname which is always written with an umlaut, though this cannot be found anywhere in this book. One last minor complaint regards the organization of the table of contents, which includes only the titles of the chapters and not those of the sections, making it difficult when searching for a specific topic.

Overall, however, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Columbian Exposition* is a valuable study on the representations of Japanese Buddhism during the modern period and on the attempts Japan made at constructing an image which enabled her to face the challenges of the West, and be recognized as a ‘civilized’ nation with a highly developed spiritual culture. Judith Snodgrass’ book, therefore, provides an important contribution to the contemporary scholarship on Japanese Buddhism and to the debate on questions related to power struggles in their orientalist and occidentalist manifestations, which are relevant to the understanding not only of Japanese Buddhism of the Meiji period, but also of the recent situation of Buddhism as a whole both within and outside Japan.

Vasubandhu and the Yogācārabhūmi: Yogācāra Elements in the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya. Robert Kritzer. *Studia Philologica Buddhica Monograph Series XVIII.* Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2005. ¥1700 paper, xxxvii + 417 pages. ISBN 4-906267-51-3.

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What is the Sautrāntika? How was Vasubandhu converted to Mahāyāna Buddhism? The relationship between Vasubandhu and the Yogācāra has been repeatedly exam-