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Seeking Śākyamuni: Travel and the Reconstruction of Japanese Buddhism

Abstract: The reconstruction of Japanese Buddhism in Meiji, Taisho, and Showa Japan involved not only interchanges with Europe and the United States. A central but overlooked catalyst for change was increased travel to and exchange with other Buddhists in Asia. An examination of travel accounts and other writings of three Meiji-era Japanese Buddhist travelers to South and Southeast Asia—Kitabatake Dōryū, Shaku Kōzen, and Shaku Sōen—reveals how contact with Buddhists in those regions stimulated Japanese Buddhists to rethink the role of the historical Buddha in their tradition and demonstrates the importance of these contacts for Buddhism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

With the opening of Japan to increased foreign contact with Europe and the United States in the 1850s, Japanese Buddhist scholars and clerics, like other members of the Japanese elite, began to travel abroad in significant numbers for the first time since the seventeenth century. Beginning in the early 1870s, Japanese Buddhists followed the imperative of the Charter Oath by fanning out to seek knowledge throughout the world. Having mastered modern philological methods, Sanskrit, and Pāli, Japanese scholars and clerics returned home to assume influential university appointments in Buddhist and Indian studies and to serve in important administrative and educational capacities in their respective denominations.

Over the last several decades, a number of scholars have described how

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the responses of Japanese Buddhists to increasingly bold Christian missionary efforts in Japan, their exchanges with Western Buddhologists, as well as participation in the 1893 World Parliament of Religions helped reshape the perceptions and practice of Japanese Buddhism. Many of these studies have underscored the complex interchanges and refractions that occurred as Japanese Buddhists adapted Western scholarly ideas about Buddhism for their own apologetic purposes, in the process transforming the image and practice of Buddhism in both Japan and the West.¹ These studies have gone a long way toward answering Aijaz Ahmad's call for analyses that show how "textualities [about the non-West] might have been received, accepted, modified, challenged, overthrown or reproduced by the intelligentsias of the colonized countries: not as an undifferentiated mass but as social agents impelled by our own conflicts, distinct political and social locations, of class, gender, region, religious affiliation, and so on."²

The founding of academic chairs of Buddhist studies in sectarian academies and imperial universities, the publication of the Taisho canon, with its claim of philological superiority, and the redefinition of Buddhism as the most scientific and philosophically coherent of all the world's religions are but a few of the important results of the intersection of Japanese Buddhist concerns and the forces of Euro-American evangelism, orientalist scholarship, and colonialism. The eventual Japanese reconceptualization of Buddhism as a world religion that had originated in India and reached the height of its efflorescence in Japan thus was closely linked with the emergence of Buddhist studies in Europe, the United States, and, with surprising rapidity, in Japan itself.

Because of the importance of the Euro-American-Japanese exchange in the construction of modern Japanese Buddhism, there has been a tendency to portray the network of global contacts made by Japanese Buddhists after the Meiji Restoration as almost exclusively bipolar between the West and Japan. Although most studies acknowledge the importance of interactions with Western scholars and, to a far lesser degree, Western Buddhists, little scrutiny has been given to the frequent interchanges between Buddhists within Asia. In this essay, I show how interaction with other Asian Buddhists—in

1. James Edward Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 136–220; Robert Sharf, "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism," *History of Religions*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (1993), pp. 1–43; Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Notto R. Thelle, *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan: From Conflict to Dialogue, 1854–1899* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987); Silvio Vita, "Printings of the Buddhist Canon in Modern Japan," unpublished paper presented at the Association for Asian Studies, Washington, April 7, 2002.

2. Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 12. The quote from Aijaz Ahmad is from Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 172.

this case, specifically South and Southeast Asian ones—influenced the shifting Japanese understanding of their form of Buddhism and its relationship to the broader Asian tradition.

Exchange was particularly prominent with those East Asian regions—Korea, Taiwan, Manchuria, and parts of China—that were eventually directly colonized or imperially dominated by the Japanese. But from the start of the Meiji period, Japanese Buddhists were also deeply interested in those regions of Buddhist Asia with which they had little prior direct contact. Noted Buddhist reformers such as Dharmapala, Henry Steel Olcott, Taixu, and Han Yongun as well as many other lesser known Asian Buddhist visitors came to Japan. They sought aid in rescuing decaying Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Asia, help in expelling foreign Christian missionaries from their own countries, new pan-Asian Buddhist ties with their compatriots, or the latest methods in Buddhist scholarship.³ The construction of modern Buddhism in Japan and, more broadly, across Asia, thus involved a wide variety of Indians, Thai, Sri Lankans, Japanese, Koreans, Tibetans, and Chinese who listened and responded not only to what Europeans and Americans said about Buddhism, but who also talked among themselves. These conversations comprised an important part of the local conditions underlying the diverse modern constructions of Buddhism.

Consideration of these exchanges in Asia reveals the emergence of a tightly linked global Buddhist culture in the late nineteenth century and illuminates the diverse “complex global loops” through which ideas were transmitted.⁴ The essentialized, text-based notions of pan-Asian Buddhism created by a host of Western Orientalist scholars and Theosophists who have been described by Donald Lopez, Phillip Almond, and others were not just transmitted from Europe directly to various Buddhist countries. In many instances, these ideas circulated between Buddhist countries, rather than be-

3. For a very interesting examination of many of these interchanges between Japanese and various South Asian Buddhists and the Theosophists, see Satō Tetsurō, “Ajia shisō katsugeki,” 1999–2002 (accessed June 28, 2002). Available at <http://homepage1.nifty.com/boddo/ajia/all/index.html>.

4. Prasenjit Duara, “The Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism,” *Journal of World History*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2001), p. 114, describes one later example of these intricate global loops, the transmission of an article, originally written in English by an expatriate Chinese born in Malaysia, which was translated into Japanese and then into Chinese, at which point it was published in the Chinese journal *Dongfangzazhi*. In a similar, later Buddhist case, the *Vimuttimaggā* was translated into English in the mid-1930s at the suggestion of the Chinese scholar of Buddhism, Wong Mou-lam, who had spent time in Sri Lanka, by a team of Sri Lankan Buddhists working in Kyushu with a Nichiren denomination cleric. The English text was then brought by the Sri Lankans to Burma where they used it as a meditation manual following their ordination in that country. See Upatissa, *The Path of Freedom (Vimuttimaggā)*, trans. N. R. M. Ehara, Soma Thera, and Kheminda Thera (1975; reprint, Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), pp. ix–xxv.

ing derived directly from their Orientalist sources. Local Buddhist practices and responses to colonial policies and missionaries of one Asian region also affected others, and Buddhists interpreted European understandings of Buddhism in light of their own experiences of these other Buddhisms. At the same time, in a process that has been labeled “intercultural mimesis,” native Japanese and other Asian constructions of modern Buddhism were often transmitted to Western Orientalist scholars, reinforcing or even giving birth to certain modern Orientalist ideas about the Buddhist tradition.⁵

What emerged as modern Buddhism in Japan and elsewhere in Asia was a result of this complex, tangled set of exchanges that resulted in the production of a discourse that wove together traditional Buddhist self-understandings with knowledges received in a wide variety of contact zones.⁶ These encounters stimulated Japanese to place their Buddhism in the context of a pan-Asian tradition at a time when contesting notions of nation and region were plentiful. The various competing Japanese Buddhist conceptions of pan-Asianism, the eastward advance of Buddhism, and the global spread of Buddhism that emerged as a result of these contacts played a significant role in the formation of radical anticolonial solidarities between the Japanese and Asian peoples but also contributed to the emergence of Japanese imperialism.

In this essay, I focus on three Japanese Buddhist clerics who traveled from Japan to other Buddhist communities or sites in Asia during the 1880s and 1890s. In particular, I examine how the travels of these individuals—Kitabatake Dōryū (1820–1907, Jōdo Shin), Shaku Sōen (1859–1919, Rinzai), and Shaku Kōzen (1849–1924, Shingon)—to India and Sri Lanka contributed to a growing interest within Japan in Śākyamuni Buddha as both a historical figure and a focal point of world Buddhism. Reports of their travels also increased awareness of other forms of Asian Buddhism and marked the start of growing Buddhist cooperation within the region.

Contact with European scholars of Buddhism no doubt also served as a catalyst for the rekindled focus on Śākyamuni as the founder of the Buddhist tradition. In part, European interest in Śākyamuni arose because the bulk of European knowledge of Buddhism derived from contacts in colonial South and Southeast Asia, where Śākyamuni was far more central to Buddhist practice than within Japan. By the mid-eighteenth century the growing body

5. Charles Hallisey, “Roads Taken and Not Taken in the Study of Theravāda Buddhism,” in Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 33.

6. Mary Louise Pratt defines “contact zones” as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination—like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today.” Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 4.

of information concerning Buddhism throughout Asia had stimulated a shift in European portrayals of the Buddha from a mythical figure to a historical personage. Through the nineteenth century, debate over Śākyamuni's biography was one important focal point in European Buddhist scholarship. European archaeologists and explorers devoted considerable energy to locating in eastern India sites associated with Śākyamuni that were described in the growing body of translated Buddhist literature.⁷ The biographical turn in European Buddhist scholarship also paralleled a similar emphasis on the biography of Jesus, a prominent feature of theological studies during the second half of the nineteenth century.⁸ European scholars of Buddhism such as Émile Senart, Hermann Oldenberg, T. W. Rhys Davids, and R. Spence Hardy all wrote at length about the life of Śākyamuni. Edwin Arnold's best-selling biography of Śākyamuni, *The Light of Asia*, published in 1879, played a significant role in shaping popular European, American, and even Asian perceptions of Buddhism. It also served as a rallying message for the global Buddhist effort to "liberate" Bodh Gayā (dubbed the "Buddhist Jerusalem" by Arnold in 1896) from the hands of its Hindu owners.⁹

The growing Japanese interest in the figure of Śākyamuni also can be traced back to the Edo period, when traditional biographies of Śākyamuni such as *Shaka hassō monogatari* (1666), *Shaka goichidaiki zue* (1839), *Hashū kigen Shaka jitsuroku* (1854), and Mantei Ōga's fictionalized biography, *Shaka hassō Yamato bunko* (1845), were published. From the 1880s on, publications concerning the life of Śākyamuni were increasingly common. A number of the earlier biographies were reissued in 1883–84. By 1888, a translation of Arnold's *Light of Asia* was underway and the Buddhist Propagation Society (Senkyōkai) began a serialized biography of Śākyamuni in its English-language publication *Bijou of Asia*.¹⁰ Interest in the biography of

7. For a description of the search for these sites and how that process influenced Western perceptions of Indian Buddhist art, see Janice Leoshko, *Sacred Traces: British Explorations of Buddhism in South Asia, Histories of Vision* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

8. Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), pp. 119–20; Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1988, pp. 54–79. Roger Pol-Droit asserts that the move from myth to history began with the publication of Michel-Jean-François Ozeray's *Recherches sur Bouddou ou Bouddou, Instituteur religieux de l'Asie orientale* in 1817. See Roger Pol-Droit, *The Cult of Nothingness*, trans. David Streight and Pamela Vohnson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 37–58.

9. Alan Michael Trevithick, "A Jerusalem of the Buddhists in British India: 1874–1949" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1988), pp. 72–73.

10. The Arnold-inspired, bimonthly, English-language journal, *The Bijou of Asia*, was first published in Japan in September 1888. Devoted to "the spread of Buddhism in other lands," the journal was published by the Buddhist Propagation Society (Senkyōkai) based in Kyoto. See the mission statement in volume 2 of the journal, published in November 1888, pp. 3–4. That same issue announced that the translation of Arnold's *Light of Asia; or, the Great*

Śākyamuni also was demonstrated by numerous authors attempting to compile pan-sectarian histories of Japanese Buddhist history and doctrine as part of a broader effort at unifying the Buddhist community in the wake of the Meiji suppression. Many of these pan-sectarian summaries of Buddhist doctrine began with a discussion of the dates of Śākyamuni's life and at least a brief biography of the figure to whom all denominations of Buddhism could be traced.¹¹ Over the course of the Meiji era, a number of critical biographies that incorporated the latest historical and archaeological discoveries concerning Śākyamuni appeared in Japan, including Inoue Tetsujirō's *Shaka shuzokuron* (1897) and *Shakamuni den* (1902) and Itō Shundō's *Shaka jitsu denki* (1908).

But the Śākyamuni boom in Japan was triggered by more than just the academic study of Buddhism in Europe and the United States. Travel by Japanese to India and other parts of Asia and information about those regions flowing into Japan also fueled the growing interest in Śākyamuni as a figure of veneration, a historical figure, and an object of archaeological inquiry. The journeys of Kitabatake, Sōen, and Kōzen, shaped by the growing global interest in Śākyamuni, further stimulated Japanese interest in him as a rallying figure for Buddhists throughout Asia.

Kitabatake Dōryū's Pilgrimage to India

Much in the history of the late Edo period and the early Meiji (1868–1912) years impelled Japanese Buddhists to reconsider their tradition and to travel abroad. From the 1840s until the mid-1870s, the collapse of the Tokugawa regime and the restoration of imperial rule had triggered the most violent suppression of Buddhism on the local and national levels in Japanese history. Although the Tokugawa regime had regarded the Buddhist clergy as a crucial aide in the maintenance of religious and social order, nativists, Shintōists, and many members of the new Meiji regime demonized them as un-Japanese, parasitic, and corrupt. Government leaders subjected Buddhist institutions to a series of harsh measures that led to the widespread laicization of the clergy and the closure or destruction of numerous temples. By 1872 the most violent of these attacks on Buddhism had ended, but the Bud-

Renunciation (Mahabhinishkramana) Being the Life and Teaching of Gautama, Prince of India and Founder of Buddhism (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1879) by a Mr. Nakagawa had begun. See Ishii Kōsei, "Thoughts and Genealogy of Ultrationalists Strongly Influenced by Buddhist Philosophy: With Special Reference to the Exchange of Japanese Nationalists and Ceylonese Buddhists," unpublished paper presented at the American Academy of Religion, Toronto, November 25, 2002. Ishii notes that one important contributor to the journal was Sawai Jun (a.k.a. Takakusu Junjirō), the influential editor of the Taisho edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon. Takakusu studied with Max Müller in the 1890s. I am grateful to Micah Auerback for calling my attention to this journal.

11. Ketelaar, *Heretics and Martyrs*, p. 200; p. 272, note 65.

dhist clergy found themselves struggling to return to the position of power and influence they once held.

Several areas of concern impelled members of the Buddhist clergy to look to Europe, the United States, and other parts of Asia as they sought to reconstruct a Buddhism that would thrive in the emerging new order in Japan. Responding to the imperative of the Charter Oath to seek knowledge throughout the world, the Meiji regime sent official delegations like the Iwakura Mission (1871–73) overseas to survey the economic, government, military, and other institutions of the Western powers that threatened Japan's independent existence. At the same time, the leadership of various Buddhist denominations and individual clerics began to look to the Western powers as a source of information for the revitalization of Japanese Buddhism. Interest within the Japanese Buddhist community in travel to Buddhist sites in other parts of Asia also increased during the first decades of the Meiji era. As commercial shipping between the ports of European colonies in Asia and Japan increased and as colonial and naval interests in those regions grew, private travel from Japan to China, Korea, India, Sri Lanka, and other Asian countries became possible in unprecedented ways.¹² European scholarly attention to Buddhist archaeological sites in India and elsewhere in Asia also contributed to a growing interest in Buddhist travel to those regions. Finally, reports of brief stops by Japanese travelers—for example, the visit by Shimaji Mokurai to India—further piqued the interest of the Japanese Buddhist community in Buddhist pilgrimage sites and the practice of Buddhism in what, from the Japanese perspective, were heretofore unexplored parts of Asia.

The leadership of the powerful and wealthy Honganji branch of Jōdo Shin was one of the most active promoters of overseas clerical travel, sending at least three clerical missions abroad between 1870 and 1880.¹³ The leadership of both the Ōtani and Honganji branches dispatched prominent figures such as Shimaji Mokurai, Akamatsu Renjō, Nanjō Bun'yū, and Takakusu Junjirō either to tour various Western nations or to study abroad in their efforts to create modern, sectarian institutions in Japan.¹⁴ One of the

12. For a description of the growth of transnational exchanges along these trade routes in South and Southeast Asia, see Mark Frost, "'Wider Opportunities': Religious Revival, Nationalist Awakening and the Global Dimension in Colombo, 1870–1920," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (2002), pp. 937–68.

13. *Shinshū shiryō shūsei* (Kyoto: Dōbō Shuppan, 1983) (hereafter SSZ), Vol. 12, pp. 39–45.

14. For information concerning the Japanese Buddhist clerics and scholars studying in Europe between 1872 and 1882, see Horiguchi Ryōichi, "Léon de Rosny et les premières missions Bouddhiques Japonaises en Occident," *Cipango*, Vol. 4 (1995), pp. 121–39. A detailed study of interactions between Japanese scholars and Max Müller and Sylvain Lévi is Maejima Shinji, *Indogaku no akebono* (Tokyo: Sekai Seiten Kankōkai, 1985). It is significant that the first wave of Buddhist scholars and clerics to travel and study abroad all were members of

last clerics to embark on one of these early Nishi Honganji-sponsored overseas missions was the adventurer Kitabatake Dōryū.

A rather eccentric figure, Kitabatake was the son of a Jōdo Shin cleric and had studied for a number of years at the academy at the Nishi Honganji. Kitabatake left the clergy for a time, engaging in a variety of military and educational efforts that included martial arts training, fighting on the side of shogunate forces, studying German language and military science, and opening a school in Tokyo for legal studies. After becoming a confidant of Ōtani Kōson, the head of the denomination, Kitabatake reentered the clergy. He engaged in a failed attempt to help Kōson move the administrative office of the Nishi Honganji to Tokyo and carry out a series of reforms of the denomination. Kōson then dispatched Kitabatake on a mission abroad to study church-state relations in Europe and the United States.¹⁵

From 1881 to 1884, Kitabatake traveled westward through much of Europe, to the United States, and then back again to Japan via Europe and India. While in Europe and the United States, Kitabatake visited a number of scholars of Asia and Asian religions, including Hermann Oldenberg in Germany and Max Müller in London. The greatest amount of time in Europe was spent in Austria, where Kitabatake regularly met with an Austrian scholar, identified only as “Stein,” to discuss Buddhism and European religious institutions and history.

At least three versions of his travel accounts were published soon after his return to Japan. The earliest, *Sekai shūyū tabi nikki: ichimei Shakamuni Butsu funbo no yurai* (A travel diary of a world tour: The history of Śākyamuni’s tomb), was published in March 1884 only a little more than one month after Kitabatake’s return to Japan at the end of January that same year.¹⁶ The same month, in what appears to have been an attempt to advertise his adventures widely, Kitabatake also published a one-page broadside, *Kitabatake Dōryū Shi Indo kikō* (Master Kitabatake Dōryū’s India travels), summarizing his pilgrimage to Śākyamuni’s “tomb” (*funbo*).¹⁷ In 1886, a

either the Nishi or the Higashi sect of the Jōdo Shin denomination. As two of the largest and wealthiest denominations in the late Edo and early Meiji periods, the Nishi and Higashi Honganji establishments were probably best prepared to fund extended travel overseas. Just how the overrepresentation of Jōdo Shin clerics in early exchanges with European and American scholars of Buddhism skewed the perceptions of Buddhism of such collaborators as Müller and Lévi is an important question. The significance of this issue has been noted by Jonathan A. Silk in “The Victorian Creation of Buddhism: Review of the British Discovery of Buddhism by Philip C. Almond,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1994), p. 194, note 6.

15. This brief biographical sketch is based on information contained in SSZ, Vol. 12, pp. 39–42, and Kashiwahara Yūsen et al., eds., *Shinshū jinmei jiten* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1999), p. 84.

16. Akiyama Tokusaburō, *Sekai shūyū tabi nikki: ichimei Shakamuni Butsu funbo no yurai* (Tokyo: Kyūshunsha, 1884), p. 84.

17. Emoto Ryūzō, *Kitabatake Dōryū Shi Indo kikō* (Tokyo: Emoto Ryūzō, 1884).

detailed version of Kitabatake's account was published as *Tenjiku kōroji shoken* (Things seen en route to India).¹⁸ The titles of these works are misleading about the nature of Kitabatake's travels, suggesting that India was the primary destination for his travel and that he spent the bulk of his time there. Although Kitabatake traveled abroad for three years, his time in India comprised just one month at the very end of his journey. Nonetheless, the India portion of his trip became the sole focus of the first two books, which Kitabatake rushed to press soon after his return to Japan. Even the lengthy travel account, two-thirds of which details Kitabatake's travels in Europe and the United States, emphasizes the India portion of the journey in the title. At the heart of all versions of his chronicles is Kitabatake's claim to have been the first Japanese to have traveled to the important Buddhist pilgrimage site of Bodh Gayā and, most important, his claim to have visited the "tomb" of Śākyamuni Buddha, an achievement that stands as the apotheosis of the three-year journey.

Kitabatake had good reason for emphasizing the India portion of his trip and the pilgrimage to Bodh Gayā. The European and American portions of his journey had been preceded by a similar trip undertaken by his bitter opponents in Jōdo Shin reform politics, Shimaji Mokurai and Akamatsu Renjō, a decade earlier. These Jōdo Shin clerics had already surveyed the religio-political scene in the United States and Europe and had brought back a considerable amount of information from those countries for the denominational leadership to use as reference for its own modernization efforts. They had also played a crucial role in the denomination's rejection of the reform agenda advocated by Kitabatake and Ōtani. But Shimaji and Akamatsu had managed only to make brief stops in South Asia during their journeys. Unlike his predecessors, Kitabatake and his fellow traveler Kurosaki Yūji, a Japanese who met Kitabatake while studying commerce in England, made a one-month trip to the interior of India that included a pilgrimage to several important sites associated with the life of Śākyamuni Buddha. It was this aspect of his trip that he chose to emphasize.

A marked shift in the language and tone of the most complete version of his 1886 travel account (the most detailed published version) occurs when Kitabatake turns his attention from the Western powers to his excursions in India. Whereas Kitabatake seemingly looked up to the various scholars, officials, and experts he met in Europe and the United States as he investigated the history of church-state relations and the state of Buddhist studies in each country, once he arrived in India, his gaze took an imperial turn. While in Europe, Kitabatake had inquired on several occasions about the general conditions in India and the state of Buddhist sites there. In his first 1884 account

18. Nishikawa Henshō and Nagaoka Senshin, *Tenjiku kōroji shoken* (Tokyo: Aranami Heijirō, 1886). Also in SSZ, Vol. 12, pp. 287–373.

of his trip to India, Kitabatake reported how, in Stein's words, India was "the most dangerous place in the world," where "not only do wild beasts and poison snakes endanger and injure people, but insane barbarian bandits threaten travelers, stealing their belongings and money."¹⁹ Reflecting on the scene from the train he took from Bombay, Kitabatake remarked on the poverty of the homes he saw and declared that even the homes of Japan's poorest mountain hamlets were greatly superior. For the first time during the whole trip, Kitabatake wrote, he felt that Japan was superior to someplace.²⁰

Kitabatake vacillated between scorn for the poverty and backwardness of India and sympathy for the plight of the Indians who suffered at the hands of their British rulers. Like other Buddhist travelers in Asia during the late nineteenth century, Kitabatake viewed India's modern history as a cautionary tale for the Japanese—if they failed to compete with the West successfully, they would suffer a similar fate. At the end of his earliest account of the journey to Bodh Gayā, Kitabatake entered into a lengthy description of what he considered a brutally oppressive British colonial regime in India. Observing the regressive nature of the British salt act that levied a tax on salt for all Indians, hurting the poorest Indians the most, Kitabatake concluded that the brutal British colonial policy was hypocritical and shameful. In the final sentence of the book, Kitabatake warned that "there was nothing more extremely unfortunate for the Indians or the whole Asian region than this."²¹

Most important, though, Kitabatake felt that rather than simply receiving knowledge, as he had in Europe, in India he could search for that which he contended had been lost—the tomb of Śākyamuni—the significance of which only a Buddhist could fully appreciate. Kitabatake emphasized that while in Europe he had asked various scholars, including Oldenberg, Stein, and Müller, about the whereabouts of the Śākyamuni tomb (*Shakashi no funbo*), but they each had responded that they did not know its location. This seems somewhat odd given that H. H. Wilson in 1854 and Alexander Cunningham in 1861–62 had tentatively identified the site of Śākyamuni's death, Kuśinagara, with the village of Kasia in the Gorakapur region. By 1876 Cunningham's assistant, A. C. L. Carlleyle, had unearthed a large stupa and a reclining statue of Śākyamuni depicting the "Great Decease" at the site. Cunningham's conjectures were published as early as 1871, but detailed accounts of Carlleyle's discoveries were not published until 1883.²² Although debate over the accuracy of Cunningham's identification continued until the early twentieth century, it seems unlikely that someone as concerned with the biography of Śākyamuni as Oldenberg would have not

19. Akiyama, *Sekai shūyū*, pp. 10–11.

20. SSZ, Vol. 12, p. 345.

21. Akiyama, *Sekai shūyū*, p. 84.

22. D. R. Patil, *Kuśinagara* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1981), pp. 13–14, briefly describes the British efforts to locate Kuśinagara.

known of the earliest of these archaeological discoveries by the time Kitabatake came to Europe in the early 1880s. But, according to Kitabatake, out of all of his inquiries into the location of Śākyamuni's tomb, only one person, an English-speaking Indian in Benares, responded positively, saying he had seen something in a local Indian paper about the discovery of the tomb. Unfortunately for Kitabatake, however, his informant had forgotten the exact location of the site.²³

On the return trip to Japan in the autumn of 1883, Kitabatake and Kurosaki sailed from Italy to Bombay, where they boarded a train bound for eastern India. After disembarking in Benares, Kitabatake and Kurosaki made their way by cart and on foot toward Patna and, eventually, Bodh Gayā. As in much imperial travel literature, the inhabitants of India are rendered almost mute and invisible in Kitabatake's descriptions. Kitabatake derisively referred to the natives as *kokudo/kuronbo* (blacks) and portrayed them as nearly naked, that is, uncivilized. Much to their dismay and surprise, the Japanese found that not only did the people they encounter not speak Japanese, but they could not even understand English, French, or Chinese.²⁴

After several difficult weeks of travel, forced to resort to hand gestures and pictures to make themselves understood, the two travelers finally arrived in Bodh Gayā. There Kitabatake and Kurosaki came upon a group of Indian workers excavating in the vicinity of the Mahābodhi temple, the site of Śākyamuni's awakening. Only after encountering the site foreman did Kitabatake discover that they had indeed made it to Bodh Gayā. In an extended conversation with three English-speaking Indians directing the dig, Kitabatake and Kurosaki learned that the disrepair of Bodh Gayā was due to the ascendance of "Brahmanism" some 1,800 years ago. The Indians, according to Kitabatake's account, also informed the Japanese of the history of the discovery of "Śākyamuni's tomb" at the site some ten years earlier and of the current efforts to fully excavate it. One of the foremen explained that the two Japanese were extremely fortunate to have come upon the site when they did. Had they arrived earlier, he explained, they would have been unable to see the then unexcavated tomb. In the first 1884 account, the foreman attributed both the preservation of the tomb and the good fortune of the clerics to the power of the Buddha, who had led Kitabatake and Kurosaki to the site. The foreman then urged the Japanese to go to the tomb and offer thanks to Śākyamuni for having ensured the preservation of the tomb and for leading the men to it just as it was uncovered.²⁵ The portrayal of the preservation of the tomb and its discovery by Kitabatake and Kurosaki sug-

23. SSZ, Vol. 12, pp. 350–51. For a summary description of European attempts to locate sites associated with the narrative biography of Śākyamuni, see Leoshko, *Sacred Traces*, pp. 30–60.

24. Akiyama, *Sekai shūyū*, p.12.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

gests that the Japanese were destined to arrive at the site just as the structure was being unearthed.

At this juncture in the narrative, Kitabatake underwent a transformation, shedding his explorer's clothing for his Buddhist robes. Taking a copy of the Three Pure Land Sutras (*Sanbukyō*) that had been presented to him by the head of the Honganji when he departed Japan and grasping his prayer beads, Kitabatake was led to the excavated structure, accompanied by Kurosaki. With the Indian workmen all gathered around and paying obeisance, Kitabatake opened the tomb, revealing a standing statue of Śākyamuni. From his copy of the Three Pure Land Sutras, he performed an abbreviated reading of the texts and prostrated himself before the tomb. His service completed, Kitabatake ascended from the site of the tomb along with Kurosaki and the Indians who had gathered around him.²⁶ Kitabatake then commissioned one of the stonemasons working at the site to carve a stele (*sekihi*) to commemorate his visit. The stele (see Figure 1), which was reportedly still standing at Bodh Gayā in 1933, read, "Since the founding of Japan, I am the first to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of Śākyamuni. Dōryū, December 4, Meiji 16 [1883]."²⁷

Kitabatake's account of his discovery is curious. I do not have space in this article to unravel how Kitabatake and Kurosaki could have gone so far astray in their assessment of what they found at Bodh Gayā. Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that the pair had made their way not to the site of Śākyamuni's tomb, but to the place of his awakening. Strangely, at no point does Kitabatake connect Bodh Gayā with Śākyamuni's enlightenment. The closest thing to the excavation of Śākyamuni's tomb may have been the excavations that took place in the late 1870s at Kuśinagara, the site of Śākyamuni's death, which was hundreds of miles away near Gorakhpur in the vicinity of the India-Nepal border. That Kitabatake could be so wrong about Indian geography is not hard to understand. That he seemingly was so ignorant of the details of Śākyamuni's biography indicates how little was known about such matters in Japan during the mid-Meiji period, even among high-ranking Buddhist clerics.²⁸

Nonetheless, Kitabatake's pilgrimage to sites associated with the life of Śākyamuni held great significance for him and had great potency as a symbol for Japanese Buddhists. The woodblock illustration (Figure 2) of the

26. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

27. Emoto, *Kitabatake Dōryū shi Indo kikō*. A slightly different version of the stele, without the word *hajimete*, is found in Akiyama, *Sekai shūyū*, p. 1, and SSZ, Vol. 12, p. 365. The respective drawings of the stele (*sekihi*) in the different accounts of Kitabatake's adventure vary slightly. Izumi gives the same reading as in SSZ, Vol. 12, p. 365, and claims that the stele still existed in 1933. See Izumi Hōkei, "Meiji jidai ni okeru toin no Bukkyūto," *Gendai bukkyō*, Vol. 105 (1933), p. 163.

28. Izumi Hōkei also has noted with curiosity Kitabatake's error. See *ibid.*, p. 163.



Figure 1. Kitabatake's stele at Bodh Gayā. From Akiyama Tokusaburō, *Sekai shūyū tabi nikki: ichimei Shakamuni Butsu funbo no yurai* (Tokyo: Kyūshunsha, 1884), p. 1.



Figure 2. Kitabatake at Sakyamuni's tomb. Akiyama, *Sekai shūyū*, pp. 2–3.

event that is contained in the earliest published account of Kitabatake's travels provides a glimpse of how his actions were construed by one artist who read this account and, perhaps, how it was viewed by a wider Japanese audience. The illustration conflates the standing image of Sakyamuni with common images of Amida (Amitābha) Buddha, the central object of veneration for Kitabatake's Jōdo Shin denomination. In the print, Sakyamuni, although an Indian himself, is depicted as light skinned as Kitabatake and Kurosaki. As in many traditional Japanese depictions, humans are connected to the Buddha by rays of light that stream forth from him. In this particular rendering of the events, Kitabatake is shown in full Buddhist clerical garb and stands erect, receiving Sakyamuni's light for all others present. The Japanese cleric serves as an intermediary not only for other Japanese—here depicted as the half-erect Kurosaki in Western clothing, that is, the vestments of civilization—but also for the dark-skinned, almost naked and, thus, uncivilized, kneeling Indians. Curiously, the literate, English-speaking Indians directing the excavation are absent from the picture. Kitabatake, the Japanese Buddhist cleric, in timeless robes that echo those worn by Sakyamuni himself, delivers the “Light of Asia” to the Japanese, halfway to civilization and enlightenment, and to other Asians, who lag behind on the road to modernity. The woodblock illustration thus clearly demonstrates the superiority of the Japanese both as Buddhists and successful modernizers in

comparison with the Indian workers. At the same time, the portrayal does not reject out of hand solidarity with Japan's less advanced Asian compatriots, who, at the very least, share a Buddhist past with the Japanese, as evidenced by their participation in the rites for Śākyamuni officiated by Kitabatake. In this way, the illustration differs from the sorts of contemporaneous pictorial and journalistic representations of other Asian groups such as the Taiwanese aborigines, who were depicted as being clearly hostile to the Japanese civilizing influence and, therefore, justifiable targets of Japan's colonial aspirations.²⁹

Shaku Kōzen and Shaku Sōen in Sri Lanka

Kitabatake was but the first among what soon became a steady stream of Japanese travelers to visit important Buddhist sites in South and Southeast Asia. Following his return from India in January 1884, Kitabatake lectured to the public about his travels in Europe, the United States, and India. In a May 1885 reader survey conducted by the *Konnichi shinbun* of the most popular leaders in ten different fields, ranging from military affairs to painting, Kitabatake was the most popular Buddhist preacher (*kyōhōka*), receiving 486 votes.³⁰ Although the exact extent of Kitabatake's direct influence on Kōzen and Sōen is uncertain, it is clear that both clerics had heard of Kitabatake prior to embarking on their own journeys to South Asia. For example, while a student at Fukuzawa Yukichi's Keiō Gijuku in Tokyo from 1885 to 1886, Sōen expressed admiration for Kitabatake's compelling exposition of the Buddhist teaching, particularly in the context of a growing Christian presence in the Kanto region.³¹ According to Noguchi Fukudō, after resolving to travel to South Asia, Kōzen consulted directly with Kitabatake.³²

Unlike Kitabatake, who spent little over one month in India, Sōen and

29. Robert Eskildsen has noted how in the case of the Taiwanese aborigines these portrayals "increased the perceived cultural distance that separated the Japanese from the aborigines. In the context of the 1870s, a larger cultural distance helped both to validate Japanese claims for higher status in the Western-dominated international order and to eliminate a middle ground between civilization and savagery that might trap the Japanese in a less than salutary solidarity with other East Asian peoples." See Robert Eskildsen, "Of Civilization and Savages: The Mimetic Imperialism of Japan's 1874 Expedition to Taiwan," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 2 (2002), p. 402. The relationship between Japanese Buddhist travelers in South and Southeast Asia and the natives of those regions was far more ambiguous. Nonetheless, Kitabatake and Sōen's accounts of their travels contain hints of the same sort of colonial attitudes described by Eskildsen.

30. The survey is cited in Kitabatake Dōryū Kenshōkai, ed., *Gōsō Kitabatake Dōryū* (1956; reprint, Tokyo: Daikūsha, 1994), pp. 79–80. I have not been able to consult the original newspaper survey to confirm the information in this source, which verges on hagiography.

31. See Inoue Zenjō, *Shaku Sōen den* (Kyoto: Zenbunka Kenkyūsho, 2000), pp. 41, 47.

32. Noguchi Fukudō, *Shaku Kōzen to Shakuson shōfūkai* (Kanagawa: Sanneji, 1920), p. 6.

Kōzen practiced for extended periods in Theravāda Buddhist monasteries in Sri Lanka, which was then a British colony.³³ These two clerics also differed from Kitabatake in that they came from two primarily monastic denominations of Buddhism—Zen and Shingon respectively, rather than the non-monastic Jōdo Shin denomination. Like Kitabatake, their contact with Buddhism in South Asia and with ideas flowing from Europe and the United States through Sri Lanka led them to reassess the importance of Śākyamuni Buddha for Japanese Buddhism. It is thus fitting that when, in the early 1870s, the Meiji regime forced all Buddhist clerics to assume surnames, both men chose the name Shaku, the Japanese transliteration of Śākya, the clan name of Śākyamuni.

The two Shakus traveled to Sri Lanka within one year of each other, with Shaku Kōzen heading to the island first in 1886.³⁴ Kōzen was sent to South Asia by his teacher, Shaku Unshō, a severe master who was renowned for his strict adherence to the numerous monastic regulations described in the Vinaya, behavior that was rare in the Meiji era. In 1886, having learned of the decaying state of Buddhist sites in India from an “Indian” lecturer in Tokyo and after speaking with Akamatsu Renjō, who had made a brief stop in Sri Lanka, the 59-year-old Unshō dispatched his student Kōzen to survey the situation. Unshō also requested that Kōzen study the Buddhist precepts used in Sri Lanka and Buddhist customs of the region before returning to Japan.³⁵ Kōzen remained in South Asia for seven years before returning to Japan in 1893.

Sōen, ten years Kōzen’s junior, traveled to Sri Lanka in 1887 to complete his Zen training, to study Sanskrit and Pāli, and to survey the state of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Sōen had been given an additional push to head to Sri Lanka by Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), who urged Sōen to go to the island to study the “origins of Buddhism.” One of Sōen’s seniors notes in a farewell letter to the cleric that Sōen “had decided to sail to India’s Sri Lanka

33. Biographical information about Shaku Kōzen comes from Tsunemitsu Kōnen, *Meiji no Bukkyōsha* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1968), Vol. 1, pp. 371–82; Noguchi, *Shaku Kōzen*; Higashimoto Tarō, “Gunaratna Shaku Kōzen Wajō den,” *Kaigai Bukkyō jijiō*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1944), pp. 1–11; and the very useful Itō Hiromi, *Unshō/Kōzen ibokushū* (Tokyo: Bunka Shobō Hakubunsha, 1974). There is some question about the pronunciation of Shaku Kōzen’s name. Shingon sources and Tsunemitsu read his name Shaku Kōnen. However, Sōen writes the name Shaku Kōzen in roman letters in the front of his diary, *Seiyū nikki* (Kamakura: Tōkeiji, 1941), and Unshō, in an English-language letter to Sumaṅgala, also refers to Kōnen as Kōzen. I shall refer to him throughout this essay as Shaku Kōzen.

34. Unfortunately, a record of Kōzen’s stay in Sri Lanka does not appear to be extant—the current abbot of Kōzen’s temple told me there is no diary of his stay at Sanneji. However, the first two-thirds of Sōen’s record of his three-year stay in Sri Lanka does exist and has recently been reissued in a modern Japanese translation. See Inoue Zenjō, *Shinyaku Shaku Sōen “Seiyū nikki”* (Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku, 2001).

35. Tsunemitsu, *Meiji no Bukkyōsha*, Vol. 1, pp. 372–73.

in order to experience first hand the conditions of Buddhism there and later help revive the decaying teaching of this country.”³⁶

Official contacts facilitated Kōzen’s and Sōen’s trips to Sri Lanka. Hayashi Tadasu, who had met a Sri Lankan official on his way back to Japan from London in 1871, helped provide the initial contacts necessary for Kōzen and Sōen to travel to the island. Sōen also mentions in his travel diary that he brought with him a letter of introduction from Hayashi that he presented to his lay patron in Sri Lanka, E. R. Gooneratne, upon arriving on the island.³⁷ Through Kōzen’s connections, both studied under the same Theravāda master, Paññāsekharā, a close associate of the learned clerical leader, Hikkaḍuvē Sumaṅgala (1826–1911). Sumaṅgala was in many ways a cosmopolitan monk who nurtured contact not only with foreigners such as Henry Steel Olcott but also, through correspondence, with clerics in Burma, Thailand, and Japan. Interested in reviving Theravāda Buddhism throughout Asia, Sumaṅgala facilitated the sojourns of numerous Japanese clerics in Sri Lanka.³⁸ Although Sumaṅgala served for a number of years as the head of the Buddhist Theosophical Society’s clerical division, at times he disagreed strongly with Olcott, at one point even threatening to resign his position over what he considered unorthodox interpretations of nirvana in Olcott’s *Buddhist Catechism* and for Olcott’s questioning the authenticity of the Tooth Relic, which devout Sri Lankans contended was Śākyamuni’s tooth.³⁹

The two Japanese clerics had gone to Sri Lanka seeking a pure, original Buddhism that they could transmit back to Japan. What they discovered in nineteenth-century Sri Lanka was a tradition undergoing radical change. In colonial Sri Lanka, Buddhism was being transformed against a background of widespread Christian missionary activity, the solidification of the British colonial administration, and, ironically, a new emphasis among Sri Lankan Buddhists themselves in reviving a decaying Buddhist tradition by returning to the “pure” origins of the tradition.⁴⁰

At least some of the impetus for the revival of Sri Lankan Buddhism and

36. Shaku Sōen, “Nantei Kūgaku Oshō o okuri kotoba,” *Seiyū nikki*. (Page numbers are not given in this portion of the original text.)

37. Inoue, *Shinyaku Shaku Sōen “Seiyū nikki,”* pp. 76–81. See also Satō, *Ajia shisō katsugeki*, <http://homepage1.nifty.com/boddo/ajia/all/eye7.html>.

38. See, for example, the English-language letters exchanged between Sumaṅgala and Shaku Unshō, J. H. Barrows, and the Thai king, Chulalongkorn, in Yagirala Śrī Prajñānanda, *Śrī Sumaṅgala Caritaya dvitīya bhāgaya* (Colombo: Lake House Publishing, 1947), pp. 768–69 and 774–76. I thank Anne Blackburn for providing me with copies of this correspondence.

39. Stephen R. Prothero, *The White Buddhist: The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), pp. 167–68.

40. The nineteenth-century Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka is examined in detail in several works, including George Doherty Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation, and Response* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988); Richard Francis Gombrich, and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious*

opposition to the Christian missionaries came from the American Theosophist, Henry Steel Olcott, and his Sri Lankan associate, Dharmapala (née Don David Hevavitharana), both of whom played major roles in the creation of an increasingly rationalist reform Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Sōen's diary makes clear that he and Kōzen were in contact with both Dharmapala and Sumaṅgala. According to the diary, Kōzen, who was based in Colombo, traveled frequently to Galle, where the two Japanese clerics together visited a variety of monasteries and laypeople. Within a few months of arriving in Sri Lanka, Sōen began using an English-language copy of Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism* to practice his English, writing out verbatim the first portion of the book. This text, which mimicked the primers used by Christian missionaries, presented Buddhism as a textual, rational, scientific religion centered on the founder, Śākyamuni. Olcott's approach turned Buddhism into "one religion among many. And this reified 'ism' was immediately reduced to the beliefs of the ancient Buddha."⁴¹ It is the section on Śākyamuni that is quoted by Sōen, who wrote out passages such as "Is Buddha a god? No"; "Was he a man? In form, but internally not like other men"; and "Where was Kapilavastu? In India, 100 miles northeast of the [sic] Benares, and about 40 miles from the Himalaya mountains."⁴²

The Sri Lankans seem to have celebrated the visiting Japanese clerics as comrades in the struggle against the missionaries and the British colonial order. Although we do not have any account of popular reaction to Kōzen's ordination, Sōen's diary details the festivities that accompanied his own. Just as crowds all over the island lauded Olcott, one of the first white Europeans on the island formally to receive the five lay Buddhist precepts, Sri Lankans considered Sōen's ordination as a novice monk (*sāmaṇera*) a highly auspicious event. According to Sōen's diary, his ordination on May 6, 1887, was attended by a boisterous crowd of more than 1,000 people, who

Change in Sri Lanka (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); and Kitsiri Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750–1900: A Study of Religious Revival and Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976). The international interests of the Sri Lankan Buddhists, especially in South and Southeast Asia, are explored by Mark Frost in "'Wider Opportunities.'" Although commonly referred to as "Protestant Buddhism," the usefulness of this characterization in Sri Lanka has been called into question by several authors in recent years. According to Blackburn's recent critique, portraying the shifts in Sri Lankan Buddhism as simply a response to the West denies agency to the Sri Lankan Buddhists and fails to take into account reformist trajectories well underway prior to the nineteenth century. See Anne M. Blackburn, *Buddhist Learning and Textual Practice in Eighteenth-Century Lankan Monastic Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 200–203.

41. Prothero, *White Buddhist*, pp. 102–103.

42. Shaku Sōen, *Seiyū nikki*, pp. 56 recto, 57 verso, 61 verso–62 recto. For a Japanese translation of these questions and answers, see Inoue, *Shinyaku Shaku Sōen*, pp. 126 and 134–35. Sōen may well have seen the Japanese translation of the *Buddhist Catechism*, *Bukkyō mondō*, which was published in April 1886. See Satō, *Ajia shisō katsugeki*.

celebrated the event with fireworks and Western-style Buddhist hymns. The geopolitical implications of the event were clearly on the mind of at least one member of the crowd. A Sri Lankan layman in attendance told Sōen that there had not been such a grand event since the British had colonized the island. The man elaborated that this celebration expressed the islanders' gratitude to the Buddha, Japanese-Sri Lankan Buddhist solidarity, and, finally, congratulations to Sōen for receiving his monastic vows. Sōen wrote that from that day forward he wore Theravāda monk's robes while in Sri Lanka.⁴³

Despite the warm welcome Sōen received in Sri Lanka and his immersion in Theravāda monastic life, Sōen found some Sri Lankan customs repugnant and he was not totally enamored with the Buddhist practice on the island. Writing early in his stay, Sōen described his difficulty pronouncing Sinhala and adapting to customs such as eating with one's fingers, walking barefoot on the hot ground, washing his behind with water after defecating, and blowing his nose with his hand.⁴⁴ More significant, Sōen criticized the lack of balance in Sri Lankan Buddhist practice. Noting that Buddhist training required equal attention to each of the three learnings (*sangaku*)—morality, meditation, and wisdom—Sōen wrote that in Sri Lanka the monks had totally ignored meditative practice in favor of unreflective textual study. Paying careful attention to the monastic rules (Vinaya) while lacking meditative attainment was as pointless as “a monkey donning a cap,” Sōen concluded.⁴⁵

While in Sri Lanka, Sōen wrote one of the earliest Japanese-language works on South Asian Buddhism. The book, *Seinan no Bukkyō* (The Buddhism of the southwest) was completed in August 1888 and was published in Japan in January 1889. In this work, Sōen's familiarity with Olcott's and Dharmapala's reform Buddhism, Western Orientalist scholarship, and Sri Lankan monastic life are clearly evident. Having directly witnessed Hong Kong and Sri Lanka under British rule and having only recently learned of Britain's expansion into Burma, Sōen graphically described the plight of Buddhism in Asia: “at the front door the wolf of Christianity opens its jaws; at the back door the tiger of Islam sharpens its claws.” The situation, however, was not entirely hopeless. Sōen saw the emergence of the Theosophical Society in the West as a sign of growing interest in Buddhism. To nurture this nascent sprout of the tradition and thereby ensure the future flourishing of Buddhism, Sōen urged southern and northern Buddhist clerics to unite and actively proselytize in the West.⁴⁶

43. Shaku Sōen, *Seiyū nikki*, pp. 47 recto-49 recto.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 41 recto-41 verso.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 40 verso-41 recto.

46. Shaku Sōen, *Seinan no Bukkyō* (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1889), pp. 86–88.

In a chapter entitled “Bukkyō no taii” (The gist of Buddhism), Sōen noted important differences in the practice of image veneration between the Buddhists of Northeast Asia (Tōhoku no Bukkyōsha) and those of Southeast Asia (literally “Southwest”: Seinan no Bukkyōsha). Whereas, for the most part, Buddhists of Sri Lanka and other Theravāda countries venerated only Śākyamuni, Buddhists of Northeast Asia venerated a host of different deities, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. Sōen saw the great diversity in images of worship as a problem for Japanese Buddhists, particularly during the period of crisis in which they found themselves. Without a sense of unity, a moral renaissance would be impossible for Buddhism. Sōen had no illusions about the difficulty in achieving this for all Buddhists, however. For this reason he argued that Buddhists in Japan should begin by choosing one figure of veneration for their own denomination of Buddhism. Members of the Jōdo Shinshū, for example, uniformly worshiped Amida, which gave their denomination a unity that was exceptional. For his own Rinzai denomination, Sōen argued that Śākyamuni should be made the central image of veneration. Not only would this unify the Zen school, it would also provide common ground with the Buddhists of Southeast Asia and with people familiar with Buddhism in Europe and the United States.

When we ask which Buddha is most appropriate as the main image of veneration, I believe that it is Śākyamuni Buddha. (This does not apply to denominations that, like Jōdo Shinshū, already have a designated image of veneration.) That is because Śākyamuni is our Great Master to whom we are indebted for the Teaching, that is, he is the Teacher for the current cosmic age. . . .What is more, today Śākyamuni’s name is not valued just in Buddhist countries, it is known in all the countries of Europe and the United States. People who do not know the names of other buddhas are numerous not only in the West, of course, but also in other Buddhist countries of Asia [Tōyō]. In Southeast [Seinan] Asia those who do not even know the names of the seven past buddhas are numerous. Śākyamuni is the image of veneration that is karmically connected with the civilized world of the twentieth century.⁴⁷

Although both Kitabatake and Sōen were ambivalent about what they saw in South Asia, Shaku Kōzen (shown in Figure 3) embraced the Theravāda Buddhism of Sri Lanka as the purest, truest form of Buddhism, becoming, for all intents and purposes, a convert. Kōzen remained in South Asia for seven years, studying under Paññāsekharā and other teachers in Sri Lanka and visiting a variety of Buddhist sites in India. Whereas Sōen lived

47. Ibid., p. 46. A very similar, albeit less prescriptive, observation about the focus on Śākyamuni in Theravāda Buddhism was made in 1891 by Ōda Tokunō, a Higashi Honganji Jōdo Shin cleric who studied in Thailand from 1888 to 1891. See Ōda Tokunō, *Shamu Bukkyō jijō* (Tokyo: Shinshū Hōwa Shūppan, 1891), pp. 46–50.



Figure 3. Shaku Kōzen. Courtesy of Tōkeiji. Photograph by the author. (Figures 3-6 were in an album of photographs now in the collection of Tōkeiji.)

in Galle for most of his time in Sri Lanka, Kōzen studied at the relatively new monastic training college, Vidyodaya Piriveṇa, in Colombo, where Sumaṅgala served as principal. Kōzen also engaged more fully in Sri Lankan monastic life, receiving the full monk's (*upasampadā*) Theravāda ordination from Sumaṅgala on June 6, 1890, in Kandy, making him, according to Noguchi, the first recorded Japanese to become a full-fledged Theravāda monk (*bhikkhu*).⁴⁸

48. Noguchi, *Shaku Kōzen*, pp. 13–14.

Judging from Sōen's diary entries, Kōzen was actively involved with several of the monks who headed the opposition to the Christian missionaries in Sri Lanka. Kōzen worked closely with Olcott and Dharmapala, traveling to Madras in 1890 as a Japanese representative at the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society. In 1891 Kōzen traveled to Bodh Gayā for the first time, where he cofounded the Mahābodhi Society with Dharmapala, a fact given little attention in the recent works detailing Buddhist efforts to wrest control of Bodh Gayā from the Hindus.⁴⁹ Kōzen returned to Sri Lanka briefly in 1891, where he met another disciple of Unshō, Ato Yūjō, who brought funds gathered in Japan to purchase Buddhist sites in India. The following year, Kōzen and Yūjō returned to India to visit important places associated with Buddhism, but their naive plan to acquire these sites failed miserably.⁵⁰ In 1893 Kōzen headed back to Sri Lanka for another brief stay and finally returned to Japan on September 6.

Kōzen regarded Theravāda monastic practice as the fullest expression of the true Buddhist way of life. He hoped to reinvigorate Japanese Buddhism by establishing true Theravāda practice and ordinations. Back at his home temple, Sanneji, just outside Yokohama, Kōzen set about transforming the religious artifacts, liturgy, and calendar in accordance with his new understanding of Buddhism. Soon after his return to Japan, Kōzen established the Society for the True Lineage of Śākyamuni. In an 1893 broadside announcing the creation of the society, Kōzen wrote that the purpose of the organization was to revive the true veneration of the Three Jewels (*sanbō*)—Buddha, Dharma (Buddhist teaching), and Sangha (Buddhist monastic order)—in Japan. He spelled out very clearly that by the Buddha he was primarily referring to Śākyamuni, his relics, or things closely associated with his life, for example, the bodhi tree. He also wrote that the Jewel of the Dharma first and foremost referred to the sutras, Vinaya, and Abhidharma that had been recorded in the language spoken by Śākyamuni, which he held was Pāli. The Jewel of the Sangha, or monastic community, indicated those who were legitimate descendants of Śākyamuni, in other words, monks who had been ordained in a proper fashion and who upheld the Vinaya regulations.⁵¹

49. See Jacob Kinnard, "When Is the Buddha Not the Buddha? The Hindu-Buddhist Battle over Bodh Gayā and Its Buddha Image," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (1998), pp. 817–39, and Alan Trevithick, "British Archaeologists, Hindu Abbots, and Burmese Buddhists: The Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya, 1811–1877," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (1999), pp. 635–56. Kōzen is mentioned briefly in Trevithick, "A Jerusalem of the Buddhists in British India: 1874–1949," p. 87.

50. See Kusanagi Zengi, *Shaku Unshō* (Tokyo: Tokukyōkai, 1913), Vol. 1, p. 126, for information concerning Unshō's efforts to oversee the purchase of Buddhist pilgrimage sites from the British.

51. Shaku Kōzen, *Shakuson Shōfū o kakuchō suru no shui* (Yokohama: Sanneji, 1893), pp. 1–2.

These points were clarified further in 1898 when Kōzen, with the approval of the Shingon denomination's Great Clerical Chancellor (Daisōjō) Mikami Kaiun published the temple regulations and educational principles for Sanneji. At the beginning of the document, Kōzen warned those in charge of the various branch temples that Sanneji adhered assiduously to the "true/authentic precepts of Śākyamuni" and that it was mandatory that those at the branch temples, particularly the leaders, do the same.⁵² In the actual temple rules, Kōzen announced that Sanneji and its branch temples were Precept-Vinaya temples based on the Tathagata's Pure School of the Elders' (Theravāda) Transmission (*Nyorai shōfū jōza denshō no kairitsu dera*).⁵³ In addition, Kōzen defined the Sangha as those who received and transmitted the precept lineage of Theravāda, learned Pāli, and supported the Theravāda Sangha. He also stipulated that pure Indian-style images of Śākyamuni be enshrined and venerated at Sanneji and its branch temples.⁵⁴

Kōzen's focus on using Theravāda Buddhism as a model for the reform and unification of Buddhism in Japan was given further impetus when Kōzen received an invitation from a member of the Thai diplomatic delegation for a year of study and practice in Thailand. Departing in October 1907, Kōzen and three disciples traveled to Thailand where they met with Thai monks and participated in the rainy season retreat. Returning to Japan in December 1908, he brought with him more than 50 Śākyamuni statues and numerous Pāli canonical texts (see Figure 4). The following year, Kōzen placed these items on display and encouraged Japanese regardless of their sectarian affiliation to come and view them.⁵⁵

Kōzen's increasing interest in Śākyamuni images adds credence to stories that Kōzen removed the old object of veneration, a statue of the Maitreya, the future Buddha, from the main altar at Sanneji, and replaced it with a statue of a seated Śākyamuni that he had received from the king of Thailand, Chulalongkorn. According to popular accounts, the statue of Śākyamuni was placed in the main temple hall in the altar, which was decorated with a bodhi leaf design, constructed according to Kōzen's own plans.⁵⁶ (The bodhi leaf seems to have been a popular symbol with many Meiji Buddhists, who placed it not only on altars, but also used it to orna-

52. Shaku Kōzen, *Sanneji jihō narabi kyōyō ninka kisoku* (Kanagawa: Sanneji, 1908), p. 1; see also Itō, *Unshō/Kōzen*, p. 357, "Kokushi" (1899).

53. *Tathāgata*, literally, "the thus come/gone one," is an honorific epithet of a buddha.

54. Shaku Kōzen, *Sanneji jihō*, pp. 3–6.

55. Shaku Kōzen, *Tenjiku Shakamuni Butsuzō oyobi sanzō shōgyō seirai no en'yu* (Kanagawa: Shōfūkai, 1909), p. 1

56. According to Ishii Ryōjō, a disciple of Kōzen for many years who was interviewed by Tsunemitsu, Kōzen did not replace the statue of Miroku with one of Śākyamuni. See Tsunemitsu, *Meiji no Bukkyōsha*, Vol. 1, p. 379. It is unclear which version of the story is correct at this time, but given Kōzen's strong emphasis on Śākyamuni, the replacement of the Miroku statue seems likely.



Figure 4. Postcard of Thai Śākyamuni statues at Sanneji. The postcard reads, “Śākyamuni Tathāgata images imported from ‘India’ (*Tenjiku*). Possessions of the Shōfū Kai at Sanneji in Toriyama.” Courtesy of Sanneji. Photograph by the author.

ment the covers of Buddhist books and journals, particularly those works concerned with South and Southeast Asian Buddhism.)

Kōzen planned other changes at Sanneji to increase the focus on Śākyamuni as the center of practice and veneration. Engaging Itō Chūta (1867–1954), the architectural historian and architect, Kōzen planned to build a large hall, the Shakuōden, dedicated to Śākyamuni on a hill overlooking Sanneji (see Figure 5). Itō, who had traveled through Asia in search of the roots of Japanese architecture from 1902 to 1905, drew up plans in 1912 for two possible buildings, one Japanese-style and the other reminiscent of Thai temple architecture.⁵⁷ In addition to planning the Shakuōden, Kōzen tried to shift to Śākyamuni the focus of local pilgrimage. Placing Śākyamuni statues in 32 branch temples of Sanneji in the Yokohama area—one for each of the Buddha’s major distinguishing marks—Kōzen created a pilgrimage route for his parishioners and printed for distribution a broadside detailing the route. In this manner Kōzen attempted to replace the far more common Kannon- or Kūkai-centered pilgrimage routes with one devoted to Śākyamuni Buddha. He also instituted a liturgical calendar at the temple that included the fortnightly observance of the Theravāda confession ceremony

57. Itō, *Unshō/Kozen*, pp. 191; p. 239, note 241; Tsunemitsu, *Meiji no Bukkyōsha*, Vol. 1, p. 382. The plans for the Thai-style building are still extant. I have not seen the plans for the Japanese-style building, however. Itō had planned the Shinshū Parishioners’ Insurance Corporation building in a style reminiscent of Indian Muslim architecture. The building was completed in 1912, the same year Itō drew up the plans for the Shakuōden.



Figure 5. Itō Chūta's plan for Thai-style Shakuōden at Sanneji. Courtesy of Sanneji. Photograph by the author.

(*uposatha*) and, at least as early as 1916, the celebration of Vesak (the South and Southeast Asian Buddhist festival celebrating the birth, awakening, and death of Śākyamuni) in Hibiya Kōen.

Sanneji also became something of a salon for the study of Theravāda and Indian Buddhism. Nanjō Bun'yū (who taught Sanskrit to Kōzen before Kōzen's trip to Sri Lanka), Kawaguchi Ekai (who pioneered the study of Tibetan Buddhism in Japan), and D. T. Suzuki (a disciple of Shaku Sōen who would soon travel to the United States) all communicated or worked with Kōzen at the temple at the turn of the nineteenth-twentieth century. Along with Kōzen, a number of individuals, each of them having an association with Kōzen, produced polylingual renderings in Japanese, Sanskrit, and Sinhala of the *Shichibutsu tsūkaige* (Verse of admonishment of the seven Buddhas)—an expression of pan-Asian Buddhist unity—at Sanneji and elsewhere.⁵⁸ One polylingual calligraphic scroll of the verse by Nanjō

58. The verse, which is found in the *Dhammapada*, verse 183, as well as numerous other sources, reads, "Refraining from all that is detrimental./The attainment of what is wholesome./The purification of one's mind./This is the instruction of awakened ones" (*shoaku makusa/shuzen bugyō/jijō goi/ze shobukkyō*; in Pāli the verse reads: *sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ/*

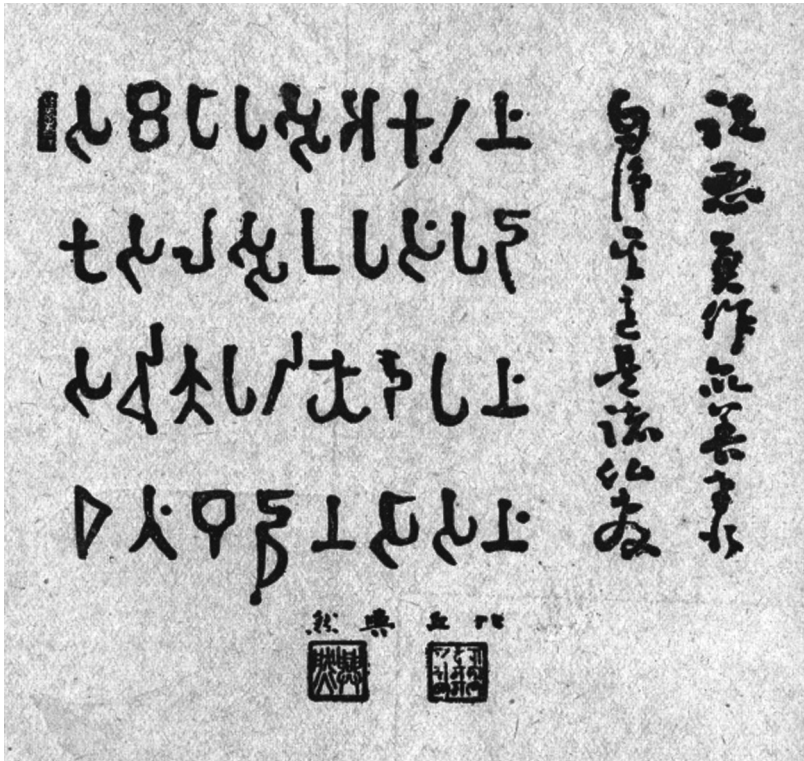


Figure 6. *Shichibutsu tsūkaige* calligraphy by Shaku Kōzen, Pāli in Aśokan Brāhmī script. From the cover of *Kaigai Bukkyō jijō*, Vol. 10, No. 6 (1944).

Bun'yū, who had studied with Max Müller, was printed in multiple copies, apparently for distribution at Sanneji, where a number of these prints are still extant. (See Figure 6.)

In a 1910 pamphlet summarizing the principles of the Shakuson Shōfū Kai and explaining the key practices of the three refuges and the five precepts, Kōzen summarized the goal of the society and, one must presume, the purpose of the various changes he had instituted at Sanneji and its branch

kusalassa upasampadā/sacittapariyodanaṃ/etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ). See John Ross Carter and Mahinda Palihawadana, *The Dhammapada: A New English Translation with the Pali Text, and the First English Translation of the Commentary's Explanation of the Verses with Notes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 44. According to Ketelaar, the *shichibutsu tsūkaige* was emphasized during the mid-Meiji period by Buddhist authors hoping to bridge sectarian differences. See Ketelaar, *Heretics and Martyrs*, pp. 185–86. Thanks to Anne Blackburn, Shimada Masahiro, and Jonathan Silk for help reading several polylingual calligraphies of this verse.

temples.⁵⁹ Like Sōen nearly 30 years earlier, Kōzen lamented the factionalism of Buddhism in Asia, particularly in Japan. In order to create a Buddhism that could flourish in the civilized world, a Buddhism that was unified in belief, practice, and purpose was necessary. Like Sōen, Kōzen believed a return to the teachings of Śākyamuni Buddha was essential for Buddhism to recover its vitality.

Buddhism is divided into northern and southern lineages and there are hundreds, even thousands, of denominations; however, the original founding teacher for all of them is Śākyamuni Buddha, the teacher to whom we all are greatly indebted. There is no true Buddhism that sets Śākyamuni's teachings aside. Therefore in order to make clear the true teachings of a Buddhism that is really Buddhism, one must, at all costs, return to the living Buddhism of Śākyamuni.⁶⁰

Kōzen's experiences in Sri Lanka and India led him to question completely the legitimacy of Japanese Buddhism in its present state. His emphasis on Pāli texts as the fundamental written source for Buddhists reflects the prioritization of those materials by Sri Lankan clerics and scholars, who had turned to those materials with fervor since the eighteenth century.⁶¹ Like such European Buddhologists as T. W. Rhys Davids, Kōzen was convinced of the primacy of Theravāda Buddhism and the teachings as they were presented in the Pāli version of the Buddhist scriptures. Unlike many European and American orientalists, however, Kōzen did not dismiss Sri Lankan Buddhism as a decadent corruption of the pure teachings that were preserved within the Pāli canon itself. Rather, Kōzen held that the "living" Buddhist tradition in Sri Lanka transmitted the essential teachings of Śākyamuni Buddha.⁶²

Believing that only the precept lineage of Theravāda Buddhism was valid, Kōzen dismissed all Japanese clerical ordinations as inefficacious and attempted to establish a Theravāda precept lineage in Japan. Maintaining a self-sustaining Theravāda order in Japan, however, necessitated having at

59. The three refuges are taken in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. The five precepts taken by the laity are not to take life, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to lie, and not to use intoxicants.

60. Shaku Kōzen, *Shakuson shōfū* (Tokyo: Shakuson Shōfūkai, 1910), pp. 7–8.

61. For a detailed analysis of the textual turn in Sri Lankan Buddhism in the eighteenth century, see Blackburn, *Buddhist Learning*.

62. Rhys Davids wrote, for example, that "it is impossible rightly to understand any one phase of later Buddhism in any country, without starting from the standpoint of the earlier Buddhism of the Pāli Piṭakas. No one can write the history of later Buddhism, say in Thailand or China, without being thoroughly acquainted with the Pāli Suttas. The very interest of the later inquiries lies in the causes that have produced the manifold changes they will disclose." Cited in Guy Richard Welbon, *The Buddhist Nirvāṇa and Its Western Interpreters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 225.

least four other monks ordained in the same lineage in order to have the quorum necessary to conduct full monks' ordinations. To accomplish this goal, Kōzen sent five disciples to Sri Lanka for ordination. His plan never came to fruition, as only one of the disciples, Shaku Nindo, remained with Kōzen after becoming a fully ordained monk. Consequently, Kōzen was unable to conduct Theravāda ordinations in Japan. After the death of his disciple Nindo, who succeeded Kōzen as abbot of Sanneji, the Theravāda ordination begun by Kōzen in Japan consequently died out. According to the account of the current abbot of Sanneji, some time after Nindo's death the statue of Śākyamuni was removed from the main altar to a reception room for the parishioners and replaced with the former image of worship, a statue of Maitreya. The liturgical calendar reverted to the usual Shingon style and the "Theravāda" period of Kōzen's and Nindo's abbacies became little more than a historical curiosity. Today Sanneji functions as a typical Shingon temple, with regular performances of the *goma* (esoteric fire ceremony) ritual taking place in the main hall of the temple in front of several large statues of Śākyamuni brought to Sanneji from Thailand by Shaku Kōzen.

Conclusions

Today we take it for granted that Buddhism is, first and foremost, about the teachings and practices of Śākyamuni Buddha. But the extent to which Japanese Buddhists share this understanding is, in part, due to the efforts of early Japanese travelers to South and Southeast Asia such as Kitabatake, Sōen, and Kōzen. The rediscovery of Śākyamuni Buddha by late nineteenth-century Japanese Buddhists took place in the context of the Western-dominated colonial order in Asia and was indelibly shaped by the Orientalist discourse that brought an essentialized Buddhism into existence. In this sense, even when traveling to other parts of Buddhist Asia, Japanese clerics were always "traveling in the West," not only literally, but also intellectually.⁶³ Kitabatake, like Shimaji, Nanjō, and many others, went to India *after* visiting Europe and the United States. And Kōzen and Sōen both encountered Western constructions of Buddhism in Japan. In Sri Lanka, where European and American works on Buddhism circulated, they dealt with Sri Lankan Buddhists who themselves, at least partially, saw Buddhism through the lens of Western scholarship.

But Japanese clerics and scholars approached both this Orientalist discourse and the various Buddhisms in Asia with trajectories shaped by specific historical conditions in Japan and Asia. Traditional Japanese Buddhist scholarship and the sociopolitical context for Buddhism in Japan also

63. The overwhelming influence of "the West" on worldwide conceptions of travel is discussed in James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 4–5.

shaped their understanding of what they encountered in India and Sri Lanka. Their emphasis on Śākyamuni was as much a product of the need for Japanese Buddhists to find common ground with their coreligionists inside and outside Japan as it was a Japanese reaction to European and American fascination with writing a definitive historical biography of the founder and identifying those geographic sites associated with his life. Unlike Müller, Sylvain Lévi, Oldenberg, and other European scholars, Kitabatake, Kōzen, and Sōen were not armchair scholars with antiquarian and philological interests. Their clerical vocation gave their search for Śākyamuni an entirely different dimension and was framed by Buddhist and Japanese idioms of pilgrimage and practice as well as by Western ideas of imperial travel. Kitabatake, for example, could do something that from his perspective was impossible for an Indian worker or British archaeologist. As a Buddhist cleric, Kitabatake was able to venerate the image of Śākyamuni, thereby serving as an intermediary for other Asians. Similarly, Sōen and Kōzen tried to bring Śākyamuni to the center of Japanese Buddhism not just as an object of scholarly curiosity and biography, but as the foundation of Buddhist worship, practice, and continued survival.

Japanese interest in Buddhist sites in India was catalyzed by Kitabatake's journey to Bodh Gayā, and the renewed focus on Śākyamuni as the founder of the tradition and symbol of Buddhist solidarity was given further impetus by Kōzen and Sōen's reports on the condition of Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia. Kōzen and Sōen's call for a return to Śākyamuni became part of a chorus of voices in the mid-Meiji era urging the creation of a united Buddhism that transcended not only interdenominational but also international differences within the Buddhist community. In much the same manner as some Japanese Buddhists attempted to rally adherents of all denominations around the most fundamental of Buddha's injunctions, the *Shichibutsu tsūkiage*, Kōzen and Sōen sought to save Buddhism in Asia through a renewed focus on Śākyamuni and the creation of a coalition uniting all Asian Buddhists in their efforts to repel colonialism and Christianity in Asia. By the time Sōen traveled to the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 as part of the Japanese delegation, not only was he familiar with some of the other Buddhist participants from Asia, but, as he had urged in his 1889 book, the goal of Western proselytization had become part of the group's mission.⁶⁴

Initial contact between Japanese Buddhist clerics and other Asians, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, reinforced the sense of peril and crisis that the Japanese, struggling to rewrite the unequal treaties, already felt. Witnessing the poverty of India, the harshness of British colonial policies, the expansion of British colonial rule into Burma, and the inroads of Christian mis-

64. Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism*, pp. 173–76.

sionaries throughout Asia, Japanese Buddhists like Kōzen, Sōen, and Kitabatake became convinced of the need to form an alliance with other Asian Buddhists. The impetus to create a united Buddhist world was fostered not only by Henry Steel Olcott, Dharmapala, and Edwin Arnold, all of whom visited Japan during the Meiji period, but also by Japanese who had themselves forged close ties with Buddhists in other parts of Asia.⁶⁵ These efforts paralleled similar attempts at modernization, cooperation, and transnational exchange occurring among Buddhists throughout South and Southeast Asia.⁶⁶ The various inflections of Asian Buddhist modernism resulted not only from bipolar, nation-to-nation contacts between individual Buddhist countries and the Western powers. They were also conditioned by local trajectories as well as cooperation and mutual influence among Buddhists throughout the region.

These three travelers discussed in this essay were but the first among a host of Japanese Buddhist clerics, scholars, artists, and tourists to make the pilgrimage to South and Southeast Asia. Until almost the end of the Pacific War, Japanese followed in the footsteps of Kitabatake and Kōzen to Bodh Gayā and other Buddhist sites in India. Many of these pilgrims produced travel accounts of their own, creating a substantial genre of South and Southeast Asian travel literature in Japanese. Kawaguchi Ekai, Okakura Kakuzō, Ōtani Kōzui, Nanjō Bun'yū, Hioki Mokusen, Kuruma Takudō, Ōda Tokunō, and Itō Chūta are but a few of the more notable Japanese who published accounts of their travels across the region.

The relatively informal contacts between Buddhists in Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and elsewhere also gave rise to more formal exchanges between Asian Buddhist countries. At the request of Inagaki Manjirō, the Japanese ambassador to Thailand, King Chulalongkorn presented the Japanese Buddhist community with relics of Śākyamuni, which were eventually enshrined in Nagoya at Nissenji (Japan-Siam Temple; today, Nittaiji, Japan-Thai Temple). Itō Chūta, who planned the never-completed Thai-style Shakuōden at Sanneji, designed the “Gandharan,” Indian-style stupa that housed the relics at the Nissenji. This temple became a symbol of Thai-Japanese solidarity and a required stop for Thai dignitaries who visited Japan. Itō also continued working closely with other Buddhist travelers to Asia, for example, Hioki Mokusen and Ōtani Kōzui. Through the first half of the twentieth century, he designed the Indian-influenced memorial stupa housing the relics at Nissenji, the “nation-protecting stupa” (*gokokutō*) at

65. On Olcott's and Dharmapala's efforts to forge an alliance with Buddhists in Japan, see Prothero, *White Buddhist*, pp. 116–33; Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism*, pp. 155–71; and Satō, *Ajia no katsugeki*.

66. Frost, “Wider Opportunities,” pp. 957–63.

the Kasuisai in Shizuoka, and the influential, architecturally eclectic Tsukiji Honganji in the 1930s, thus rendering Japan's pan-Asian Buddhist ties in stone.⁶⁷

Contacts forged by Japanese Buddhist travelers in Asia as well as Japanese military and industrial successes drew Buddhists from other parts of Asia to Japan. Dharmapala, who had met Kōzen and Sōen in Sri Lanka, attempting to tap Japanese Buddhist sympathies as part of his anticolonial efforts in India and Sri Lanka, made several trips to Japan between 1899 and 1913. Writing to the Foreign Ministry between 1899 and 1907, Dharmapala requested that the Japanese donate money and send clerics to India to help restore Buddhist sites and counter the actions of Christian missionaries. In one letter to the foreign minister, Dharmapala wrote,

There are nearly 200 millions of people in India sunk in ignorance and wallowing in the mire of superstition. On their behalf the Mahā Bodhi Society appeals to the Japanese Buddhists to send Japanese teachers and preachers to impart knowledge that has made Japan great. European and American missionaries, over a thousand, are all over this land imparting the doctrines of Christianity, establishing schools and making converts of the adults. The field is open to all and I earnestly appeal to all the leaders of the different Buddhist sects to organize a Society for the diffusion of Knowledge among the people of India. The Mahā Bodhi Society has done a pioneer's work and is willing to cooperate with earnest Buddhists of Japan.⁶⁸

The relationship between Japanese Buddhists and the Buddhists in other parts of Asia remained ambiguous, however, inviting Japanese misinterpretation of entreaties such as Dharmapala's. As visible in the woodblock rendering of Kitabatake's visit to Bodh Gayā and in Sōen's dismissive comments about Sri Lankan Buddhism, triumphalism lurked beneath the surface of many versions of Japanese Buddhist pan-Asianism. Japanese collaboration with Buddhists throughout Asia continued to grow over the first four decades of the twentieth century, but Japan's imperial project gradually subsumed the fragile pan-Asian sentiments expressed by Kitabatake, Kōzen, Sōen, and other early travelers. As Japan reached parity with the Western colonial powers, Japanese Buddhist pan-Asianism turned into paternalism toward other Asian Buddhists. Just as Buddhist sites in India needed Japanese interven-

67. On the architecture of the Tsukiji Honganji, see Cherie Wendelken, "Pan-Asianism and the Pure Japanese Thing: Japanese Identity and Architecture in the Late 1930s," *positions: east asia cultures critique*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2000), pp. 819–28.

68. Dharmapala, letter to the Buddhists of Japan, March 26, 1907. Gaikō Shiryōkan Document No. 3-10-1-8, "Shūkyō kankei zakken," Vol. 1. Dharmapala's last visit to Japan is discussed in Grant Kohn Goodman, "Dharmapala in Japan," *Japan Forum*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1993), pp. 195–202.

tion to save them—Dharmapala invited the Japanese to send missionaries to India—so Asian Buddhism required Japanese assistance and evangelization, some Japanese believed. By 1940, the Vesak celebration, originally conducted by Kōzen and his disciple, Nindo, in order to spread Theravāda Buddhism in Japan, was being performed in the name of a Japanese-led order in Asia. A program for the 1945 Vesak event conducted by Nindo at Sanneji (moved from Hibiya Kōen because of Allied bombing of Tokyo) made this explicit: “creating spiritual harmony with the peoples of Southern Asia is important foundation work for us, as we are aiming to construct the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere.” Uniting Asian Buddhists in this effort, according to the program, was veneration for Śākyamuni.⁶⁹

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69. See Kokusai Bukkyō Kyōkai, ed., *Daigokai Nanpō Butsuda matsuri* (Tokyo: Kokusai Bukkyō Kyōkai, 1945). Almost identical comments by Nindo are found in Shaku Nindo, “Kōzen Daiwajō o shinobite,” *Kaigai Bukkyō jijō*, Vol. 10, No. 6 (1944), p. 2.