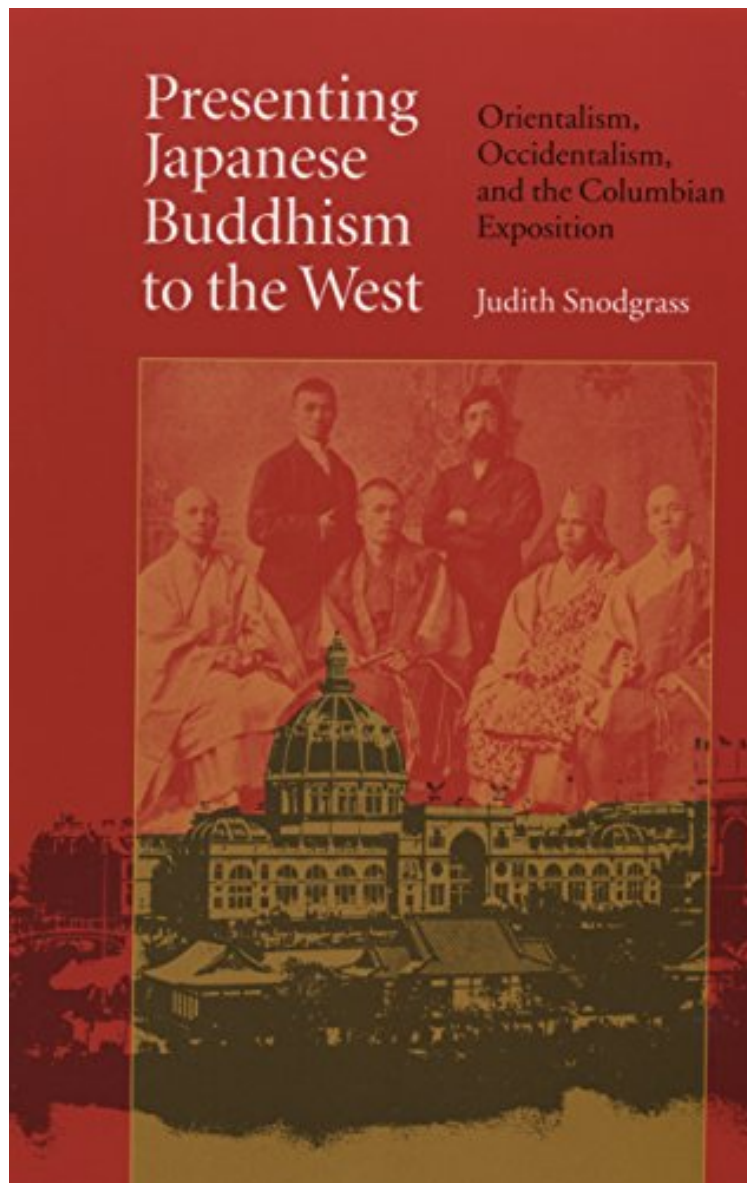


[Free] Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition

Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition

Judith Snodgrass

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By Alberto Satisfaction This is a highly well-written book about the subject of how zen buddhism entered the West via the Columbian Parliament in 1893 celebrated in Chicago. I know there's a book by Richard Seager that deals specifically with the Parliament, but this one presents a whole context in America, Europe and Japan. I found it extremely interesting and it's good even for non-specialized people, I think. Anyway, great reading.
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Disorienting Meeting of East and Midwest
By Crazy Fox This is really an excellent book. Using the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893 as a focal point, Snodgrass explores the various issues, conflicting interests and uneasy alliances, and mutual perceptions and misperceptions coming together in and branching out from this seminal event in religious history. Snodgrass has a historian's knack for critical scholarship and turns a keen eye towards the political dimensions of all of this without being reductive...one still gets a clear sense of the various deeply felt religious beliefs and spiritual convictions held by the different people who appear in the book. The Buddhist reform movements of the Meiji period and their formulation of a modern Buddhism (formulations that have become "common sense" in both Japan and America today) are covered in great, illuminating detail and with careful analysis. American assumptions of Buddhism are also dissected, and the author's critique of Paul Carus' "Gospel of Buddha"--a popular work that introduced (in a highly distorted fashion, as she shows) many Americans to the "other world religion" (besides Christianity)--is quite to the point. "Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West" is scholarly and sophisticated yet written in a clear, engaging prose style. It should be of particular interest especially to anyone interested in modern Japanese Buddhism and modern American religion, in colonial and post-colonial studies, or in the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago.
0 of 5 people found the following review helpful. There you go go go....
By Woderlust This is from the book: There are predominant view that Asian cultures are objectified and understood strictly through Western ideas. Based on a detailed examination of presentations by Japanese Buddhists at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, Snodgrass argues that Buddhists themselves helped reformulate Buddhism into a modern world religion.

Japanese Buddhism was introduced to a wide Western audience when a delegation of Buddhist priests attended the World's Parliament of Religions, part of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. In describing and analyzing this event, Judith Snodgrass challenges the predominant view of Orientalism as a one-way process by which Asian cultures are understood strictly through Western ideas. Restoring agency to the Buddhists themselves, she shows how they helped reformulate Buddhism as a modern world religion with specific appeal to the West while simultaneously reclaiming authority for the tradition within a rapidly changing Japan. Snodgrass explains how the Buddhism presented in Chicago was shaped by the institutional, social, and political imperatives of the Meiji Buddhist revival movement in Japan and was further determined by the Parliament itself, which, despite its rhetoric of fostering universal brotherhood and international goodwill, was thoroughly permeated with confidence in the superiority of American Protestantism. Additionally, in the context of Japan's intensive diplomatic campaign to renegotiate its treaties with Western nations, the nature of Japanese religion was not simply a religious issue, Snodgrass argues, but an integral part of Japan's bid for acceptance by the international community.

"Well written and intellectually engaging, this book deals with a critical moment for understanding how various modernizing Asian Buddhists reformulated the tradition in response to the West." "A cogent presentation. . . . An important contribution to the history of the history of religions and should be of interest to a broad readership." -- "History of Religions" Snodgrass's story is fascinating on several levels: as a detailed analysis of the Exposition and the Parliament of Religions; as a dissection of the veins and arteries of Japanese thought at the time; and as a point of reference for what's happening inside religions today. . . . Essential reading.--Australian Book A cogent presentation. . . . An important contribution to the history of the history of religions and should be of interest to a broad readership.--History of Religions Well written and intellectually engaging, this book deals with a critical moment for understanding how various modernizing Asian Buddhists reformulated the tradition in response to the West. A good book that will be welcomed by a wide variety of scholars and students.--Peter N. Gregory, Smith College The author's erudition consistently impresses.--Historian [Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition] is a book that contributes significantly to our understanding of a crucial chapter in modern religious and cultural history.--Religion and the Arts A fascinating account of this chapter of religious history.--Journal of the Buddhist Society of London Bring[s] together an enormous amount of information into a comprehensive whole.--Journal of Religion Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West . . . provides an intriguing back story not only for the World's Parliament of Religions but also for contemporary Buddhism.--Tricycle A deep, probing, and provocative examination of all that went into shaping one of the most important Asian delegations at the World Parliament of Religions and a significant look at forces that shaped the East-West encounter and the Japan-America connection over the course of the modern period.--Richard Seager, Hamilton College About the Author Judith Snodgrass is senior lecturer in Japanese history at the University of Western Sydney in Australia. She also edits the journal Japanese

Studies.